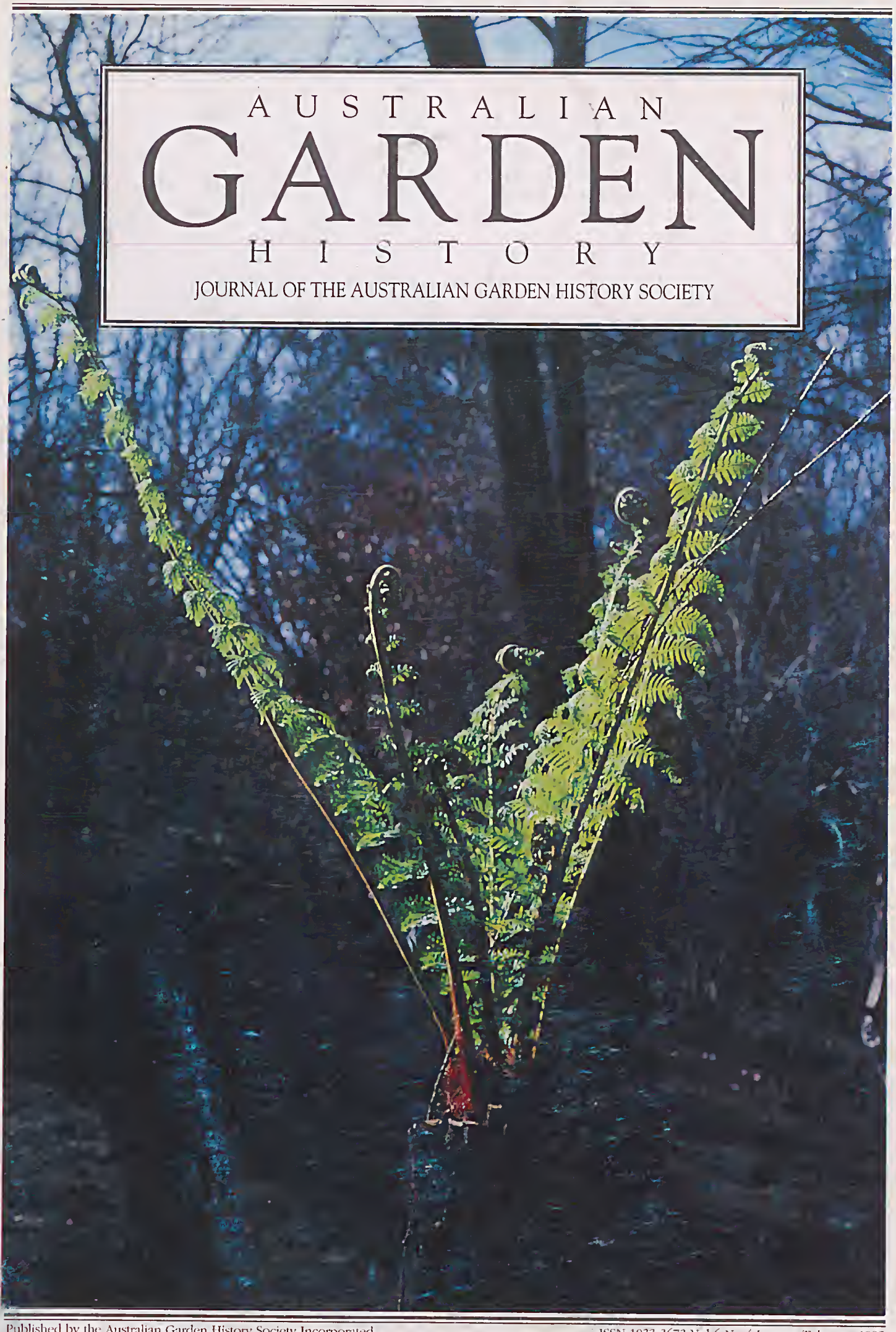
AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY



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Published by the Australian Garden History Society Incorporated

ISSN 1033-3673 Vol 6 No 4 January/February 1995

Introduction

The 1994 Conference of the Australian Garden History Society was the third AGHS conference to be held in Melbourne and clearly demonstrated the way in which the Society has matured. Garden visiting which was the 1988 theme is now well accepted and this time we took the Society one step further by addressing the conservation of the cultural landscape. We looked at the broader landscape and how change has impacted on regional identity.

Mount Macedon on Melbourne's doorstep was an ideal illustration of the effects of change beyond the garden gate. The Conference brought together speakers who set the scene by giving us vivid and varied pictures of Mount Macedon in the past. These pictures were contrasted with current issues addressed by other presenters. Among these were the dilemmas faced by various authorities managing the area to satisfy the demands from urban development. The field trips which followed the lecture programme confirmed many of the points raised by speakers.

We were fortunate to be able to draw on local speakers with a thorough knowledge of the Macedon Ranges while the wider perspective was presented by Professor Michael Hough from Canada. He shared with us his experiences of preservation of regional identity in North America and Europe.

The Conference was a thoroughly enjoyable and stimulating experience for those who attended. By presenting these papers we aim to give all members an appreciation of the issues addressed at the 1994 Conference. It is the hope of the Conference Committee that these papers will provide an ongoing stimulus for the Society to contribute valuably to discussions of issues that affect the cultural landscape. May we as a Society develop our role in the community as contributors of rational comment on regional identity and its impact on our landscape. In doing so, we fulfil our broader mission of conserving, and enjoying our garden and landscape heritage in Australia.

This presentation of the papers is dedicated to all who contributed to making the 1994 Conference a success.

Helen Page, President, Victorian Branch
Pamela Jellie, Conference Convenor

Cover: New growth on a fern following 'high temperature oxidation' in bushfires at Greenvale, 1983. See article by Gregory Moore on page 26.

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The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history—horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The editorial content of articles, or the products and services advertised in this journal, do not necessarily imply their endorsement by the Australian Garden History Society.

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Opening Address

by **Neil Robertson**

I WELL REMEMBER attending the inaugural Australian Garden History Conference at Illawarra and the excitement which accompanied it. For the first time, people from all over the country were brought together to discuss the importance of our garden heritage.

It seemed to me, and to others I spoke to, that this was the dawning of a new era in Australian gardening. We had a sense that at last gardens and gardening were being valued as an important, indeed a precious, part of our cultural heritage.

Since then, the Australian Garden History Society (AGHS) has grown and flourished. It is now, dare I say it, a vigorous adolescent, which is just as well because in 1994 we need to be strong. Gardens are as much an important part of our cultural heritage as ever they were and, at this important time in our national development, it is crucial that we ensure our gardening past is not overlooked.

As a principal player involved in the growing national organisation of Australia's Open Garden Scheme, I am delighted to salute the AGHS as the only other national horticultural organisation in Australia – at least, to my knowledge we are the only two. Certainly we are the two bodies most concerned with the maintenance and increase of gardening in this country, and while our emphases may differ from time to time, both bodies should always be aware of the new challenges and of the threats – yes, there are threats – to the important tradition we represent.

There is always a risk that gardening will be sidelined. It is seen by many of its detractors as a genteel occupation carried out by the leisured or the eccentric. But we know that gardening is a passion. After all, it is the most popular leisure pastime in Australia. Organisations like the AGHS should be playing a larger role in leading debate or, at least informing it, forming taste, and lobbying for the preservation of our heritage.

I think we tend to underestimate the influence we can wield. The membership of the AGHS includes many influential people in our community and some fine thinkers. The challenge for this Society is to harness these two elements so as to influence the look of our cities, our countryside and our individual gardens.

For my own part, and for that of the Open Garden Scheme, our concerns are with gardens of all sorts – large and small, old and new. Our aims are to increase the knowledge and awareness of gardening, of the diversity of plants, and to disseminate a greater understanding of the environment we live in. The Open Garden Scheme has successfully brought together hundreds of thousands of people since its beginnings in Victoria, and large numbers of people are impressive bodies to the powers-that-be, particularly when it is a common passion which unites them.

But I will now come to the focus of this Conference, the Macedon Ranges, and their wonderful gardens.

In my role as the National Executive Officer of Australia's Open Garden Scheme, I spend much of my time around the country visiting gardens and talking to gardeners. The inevitable response to my announcing where I come from – southern Victoria near the foot of Mount Macedon – is: 'We don't have gardens there like you do'.

When considering the landscape of Mount Macedon and its environs, we must remember that in the last 150 years it has changed more than it probably did in tens of thousands before that. Today, where settlers cleared the original forests, another generation of settlers would happily create a brick and concrete jungle. One of the

The lost garden of Derriweit, Mount Macedon, photographed by Nicholas Caire, c.1876



La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria

challenges for town planners and other authorities in the Macedon Ranges is that of controlling development. The same pressures exist for any settlement: the more attractive the area, the more people want to live there. As a child of the area, I was fortunate enough to grow up in what was then the rural and largely forgotten district of south central Victoria. A trip to Melbourne was quite an outing. Today I curse if I am kept waiting ten minutes on the freeway. I like to have my cake and eat it as much as the next person.

The Mount Macedon I knew as a child was of charmingly decayed large houses and wonderful romantic gardens to explore. Above all, Mount Macedon had great gardens and some wonderful gardeners. An early memory is visiting Brookdale, then a nursery and the property of Molly Ronalds. She was a difficult eccentric and maintained contact with the spirits, with the result that she would only sell you trees if your ancestors had the right aura. Another enduring memory is of days spent at Dreamthorpe. The more I visit gardens and talk to gardeners, the more I believe that while gardeners are bred – and I believe they most certainly are – the types of gardens we make are those formed by our earliest experience of gardens – the gardens of our mind's eye. I was fortunate in spending quite a bit of time at Dreamthorpe and for me it will always remain an ideal.

Redlands was further away from the main drag and, in its time, it was one of the most important gardens on the mount. Here I digress for a charming little story of an earlier bushfire when the Miss Tucketts' household took refuge in two boats on the lake, one containing the Miss Tucketts and a picnic, and the other the servants and the silver. They had their priorities right! There were many other such stories, for Mount Macedon abounded with characters and virtuoso gardeners. This tradition continues and you will no doubt hear more about them during this Conference.

Gardening in Australia has a rich oral tradition – much richer, sadly, than its recorded history. Macedon is, in a sense, a microcosm of gardening in Australia, and indeed of the problems we confront as historians of gardens. Bushfires and neglect, economic reality and subdivision have all taken their toll on the legacy that comes to us. Moreover, the gardens we see now represent only the tip of the iceberg. So often when I talk to good gardeners, they refer lovingly to a gardener who first captured their interest and fired their enthusiasm for gardening. They say, 'If only you could have seen such and such a garden. It was quite fantastic'. When asked what happened to it they reply, 'Yes, there are trees there now, but the garden has gone.'

For me, garden history is more than simply the history of gardens: it is about understanding both the landscape and the ways in which our forebears and precursors viewed it, reacted to it, and attempted to change it. It is also the story of these people – the figures in the landscape – the gardeners.

I am always urging people to write about their gardens – if only for their descendants. So much knowledge is lost. It seems to me that what we need now – and perhaps this is another challenge for the AGHS – is an authoritative history of Australian gardening, to include the gardeners and the vanished gardens as well as those which survive.

I will conclude with a story of happy coincidence.

In 1990, while working in England, Jane Clark – then a student at the Courtald – and I took ourselves off to Northamptonshire for the weekend to look at the Duke of Buccleuch's pictures. I had borrowed a friend's very old and singularly unreliable VW and, belching smoke and backfiring noisily, we slowly made our way up the motorway. Arriving rather late, we spent a lot of time looking at the pictures, bought some *Streptocarpus* from the stall and, as we went out, were directed to look at the gardens by the gardener's wife. The house by this time had closed for the day. Making our way slightly furtively past the main facade of the house, we encountered a woman walking two dogs and, being polite colonials, guiltily apologised for outstaying our welcome.

'Not at all,' was the response, 'but where are you going?'

'Off to see the gardens,' we said.

'Don't go there, they're full of bindweed. I'll take you to see a really beautiful garden.'

And so up the hill we went, meanwhile being commandingly cross-questioned by our kindly guide. When it emerged that we were two Australians, she was more delighted, since the garden we were being taken to see belonged to her husband's cousin, who was himself half-Australian.

Entering the garden, we encountered a Sir David Scott, very ancient and rather irritated at being disturbed in his weeding. My eyes were transfixed by the plastic pads on his knees. Overcoming his initial unwillingness, he escorted us through the garden and back to the house. As we entered the house, he asked, 'I don't suppose you know a place called Mount Macedon?' I was able to reply that not only did I know it but that I lived very nearby.

'Well,' he said, 'come up to the drawing room. We have been going through some old boxes and found some photograph albums. I don't suppose you know a house called Derriweit?'

It transpired of course – and many of you will have guessed – that Sir David was the grandson of Sir Charles Ryan, creator of the mount's grandest lost garden. The albums were full of photos taken by his father Lord Charles Scott late last century.

This was not all. 'My aunt was an artist,' he continued. Her name was Ellis Rowan. I don't suppose you have heard of her?' We were ushered up to look at the walls of his bedroom and dressing-room literally papered with plates of New Guinea's butterflies.

The coda to this story is that we had a drink with the Duchess, our earlier companion, and the albums found their way back to Barney Hutton at Mount Macedon where they mercifully survived the 1983 bushfires, even though Derriweit did not.

Sir David Scott was recognised as a great gardener in England. I like to think that his love of gardening was formed at his mother's knee and in the garden his ambitious grandfather created in that far-off antipodean paradise, which is Mount Macedon.

A Forest at the Edge of the City

by Chris McConville

JAMES OCHILTREE was one amongst many European farmers who arrived in the Macedon region in the 1860s.[1] Some years later he reflected on the environment of Macedon in the 1860s, an area with 'wild bush grandeur equal to any in Victoria'. In Romsey, Gisborne and Woodend, farming shires around the base of Mount Macedon, he had wondered at a landscape, with

> not a fence, a house to be seen – gum trees shading the sun – bracken, ferns, native grasses and black snakes everywhere – wattles and light woods in full blossom, parrots of every colour, wild pigeons, curlews, possums at night.[2]

– a landscape in short, recalled Ochiltree, where man had not yet 'made havoc with axe and pick'.

Much of this natural environment has now been erased. Yet more than one hundred years later, pre-European bush does survive in traces between farmlands, around the roughest rock outcrops and along the verges of back roads. Axe and pick have not yet wrought complete havoc in Macedon. At the same time, European plantings, the small clusters of houses at crossroads, the cuttings and bridges carrying railways towards Bendigo and on to the Murray River, the gardens planted around pastoral and mountain properties and the windbreaks which define roadways have helped to create a different beauty. Even the towns, small and compact and with streets planted with trees and views to wooded slopes and open fields, retain that sense of a village in harmony with farmland so pleasing to the European eye and central to our Western expectations of landscape.

Macedon, unlike other fringe locales around the metropolis of Melbourne, has retained a mixture of pre-European wilderness, planted garden landscapes and hamlet-like townships, a series of balanced layers built up over one hundred years. Yet, as Melbourne spreads to the north, in and around the Macedon region, that precarious balance may be easily altered. The bulldozer and the chainsaw can wreak havoc more speedily than did the axe and pick.

Macedon was amongst the first areas of Victoria invaded by Europeans in the nineteenth century. As we approach the twenty-first century, the contemporary sprawl of the city may well cover over any remaining traces of a relatively long European history. An attempt to ensure the survival of the special qualities of this region might well begin with a review of the historical processes which have created the present balance between forest, farm, township and garden.

A fixed point in the wilderness

From its first sighting by Major Mitchell in 1836, Mount Macedon was always a reference point for invading Europeans. It told overlanders with flocks and herds that they were on the correct track for Australia Felix and it warned gold diggers that they had left the security of Melbourne and were about to enter the wilderness, made more dangerous by the predations of bushrangers. Mount Macedon defined a place in trackless nature. Mitchell climbed the mount and from there first sighted Port Phillip Bay. In another journey conducted by Governor Bourke, one of his party, Captain Phillip Parker King wrote of the 'beautiful country' around the mount and of the ascent through the Macedon Ranges:

> we commenced the ascent, which we found quite laborious and fatiguing, the hillside being covered with loose rock and stones and very steep, and our way impeded by prostrate stems of mountain ash which grows to enormous size…in returning [we saw] some emus and kangaroos.[3]

In a landscape envisioned by these first invaders as wild and overwhelming, most early descriptions concentrated on the mount and the land immediately around it: land covered in forest, dark and shaped by the prodigious growth of trees and plants. Thus Robert Hoddle recorded in 1841 that he noticed hollow trees big enough to hold a couple of horses and giant tree ferns from three to six feet in height. The first gold diggers left similar accounts of the land around Mount Macedon. This time they were able to put some human identity to the dangers of the forest, for the land between Keilor and Woodend was a favourite resort of bushrangers who held up and on at least one occasion killed travellers on what was then known as the Mount Alexander Road. To William Kelly, the Black Forest, which lay across the road between Macedon and Woodend, was a 'theatre of freebooting exploits and wayfaring bloodshed'.[4] What a 'ghost-haunted lobby' was to young children, so, according to Kelly, appeared the Black Forest to diggers travelling to the goldfields.

Towns in the forest

During the first rushes the gold-diggers inched their way through the forest, finding old tracks crossed by new bullock tracks and none ever becoming a main route. Even before a clear roadway was cut through the forest, the Victorian Government was planning for a railway to the inland goldfields and on to the Murray River. In 1856 tenders were called for the first stage of the Melbourne-Mount Alexander railway and in 1859 the section to Sunbury was completed.

With the railway, townships like Gisborne thrived. Gisborne was thought a 'precocious little towney' by William Kelly, as it and other towns along the Mount Alexander Rd swelled with diggers trudging north. When mining continued at Castlemaine, Maldon and Bendigo long after the initial rushes ceased elsewhere, these towns remained bustling centres for several decades. By 1879 Gisborne had six hundred people and the whole of the Gisborne Shire had four thousand residents. Woodend, where there was more work on railways than at Gisborne, had attracted 1510 residents and, within a Woodend and Newham Shire, there lived a population of 3300.

Over the years as the towns have continued to serve new generations of travellers by car, appearances have changed. Some of the smaller travellers' stops have all but vanished. In the larger towns however, clusters of buildings still reflect the life of bustling nineteenth century service centres, where drays and coaches pulled into stations, local shopkeepers and hoteliers touted for custom and the people who had settled more or less permanently around railway stations built up their own local society, visible through churches, mechanics institutes and schools.



Richard Aitken

Mount Macedon, shrouded in mist, pictured from the Gisborne bypass

Farms and factories

After 1870, anyone travelling through Lancefield and Romsey would have noticed an unusual building. The Lancefield Malthouse was built from wood and brick and rose upwards like a string of pyramids. The Lockwood brothers from Yorkshire had leased several hundred acres at Springfield. They built their malthouse to make malt from local barley. As it was only working at full stretch in the harvest season they then converted the building into a chicory kiln for work in the off season. The Lancefield Malthouse, now demolished, was typical of the small local enterprises which sprang up in and around the towns, serving local farmers on the one hand and the demands of the nearby city on the other.[5] Throughout the shires, serving trains and feeding and sheltering passing travellers kept the towns alive. At the same time many towns supported scattered and often precarious small industries. At Newham in the 1870s stood a large flour mill. Romsey had a flour mill and a chicory mill, Lancefield a brewery.[6] At North Lancefield Abbot and Derby opened their flour mill in 1868. Eleven years later this was converted into a brewery. The Trent Brewery was known for its high quality beer and stout, made from clear local water and local malted barley.[7] By the turn of the century the little town of Riddells Creek was the site of a flock factory which continued to produce mattresses until well into the twentieth century. Outside the towns were several eucalypt distilleries and stone quarries, but the main industry from the 1830s onwards was timber-cutting.

Many such enterprises did not last into the twentieth century and buildings were often demolished. A few survivors of local industrial buildings are still visible. Newham Flour Mill still stands, and is important for its role in local industrial activity and significant as a reminder of the range of small scale local industry which characterised the townships of the area.

While Mount Macedon was winning a reputation as the perfect site for experimental horticulture, much of the shires around the Mount had swung from forestry to agriculture. The pastoralists who arrived in the 1840s were quick to see the richness of local soils and the constancy of rains. Before the gold rushes, European pastoralists seized broad expanses of land around Mount Macedon. These were often formalised into pre-emptive right pastoral leases. The Bullengorourke pastoral lease lasted from the 1840s until 1874. A farmhouse survives from this pastoral era. Built in 1870 from basalt rubble, it is surrounded by other farm buildings, lined along the drive by Monterey pines with a rose garden and other plantings near the house. Similar plantings around other properties erased local grasses in the fashion described by E.M. Curr:

> The grass originally grew in large tussocks standing from two to twenty feet apart. It bore no resemblance to a sward and when one drove over it in a dog cart, a succession of bumps was experienced from its lumpy way of growing. Gradually as the tussocks were fed down by sheep and cattle they stooled out and the seed was trampled into the ground around and, in the absence of bush fires, grew so that presently a sward more or less close resulted.[8]

Over the years, not only the native grass patterns were altered but the open landscape of the grazier was also broken up into patchwork fields, marked by different colours of crops, trees as windbreaks and the clumps of buildings around farmsteads. From Mount Macedon at the turn of the century anyone looking out over nearby country would see not just forest, but 'remnants of the Black Forest, corn fields and pasture lands interspersed chequering the landscape with patches of light and shadow'.[9]

Romsey included some of the best agricultural land in Victoria and, close to the expanding city much of the farmland was taken up before the Land Selection Acts of the 1860s. One of the pastoralists of the 1840s, W.J. Clarke, obtained control of much good grazing land by right of a Special Survey. Clarke's Bolinda Vale Estate remained the classic pastoral holding, its wind breaks and stone fencing characterising the southern parts of the Romsey Shire. Clarke himself tried to become a model land-owner, supporting local agricultural societies and shows at the Romsey Public Park and providing land for his tenants on long leases. By the end of the 1870s, chicory, potatoes, wheat and barley were cultivated in the north of the shire, while the southern portions consisted of 'grazing land of the first-class quality'.[10] The farms, on rich chocolate soil and divided into blocks of 60 to 300 acres, were let at 25 shillings per acre in 1894. Hay-making proved lucrative for local farmers, probably as with other activities encouraged by the nearby market in Melbourne. Most local farmers over the years came to rely on dairying. The Romsey Butter Factory opened in 1882 and enabled many to reach markets in Australia and overseas. A Lancefield butter factory was opened in 1894. Farming apparently suffered during the war but revived during the 1950s because of the wool boom and the fine stud herds built up by local landowners. The Clarkes at Bolinda Vale led the way, establishing an English Leicester sheep stud and a shorthorn cattle stud.

New and old forests

In 1837, after the first Melbourne land sales, a party of convicts were detailed to work in the forests around Mount Macedon, cutting timber for the expected sudden demand for building materials.[11] The gold rushes inspired another great push to cut down the forests. Props for mine shafts and timber for boilers meant that huge trees of the Black Forest were cut down and sawn up and dragged off to the gold fields. By 1854, Dodgshon Timber Mill and the Christian Timber Mill were operating around Mount Macedon.

At Cherokee (named by saw-millers from Oaklahoma), most of the town relied on timber getting. Other parts of the area were favourite sites for collecting firewood and sending it off to Melbourne. By the 1870s, all of the huge forest trees which awed the travellers of the 1850s had gone. Only then did the mills begin to close and timber gatherers drift off, often to land selections in other parts of

View onto the plains from Alton, Mount Macedon



John Hawker

Victoria. The threat to forests, and the enormous stripping of trees cause by mining, sawing of building materials and cutting sleepers for railways and wood for fuel, had destroyed the landscape of the Macedon wilderness.

A different type of forestry characterised the area at the end of the nineteenth century. Macedon was, along with Creswick, one of the key areas in Victoria's state management of forests. When Victorian governments began to reconsider their responsibilities for forests, Macedon filled a central place in plans. In 1865 bushfires had destroyed several local timber mills, burning prepared timber as well as trees. From that point onwards local millers and members of the the colonial parliament turned their minds to replantings. From 1871, schemes for a state nursery at Macedon were drawn up and, although delayed for several years, the nursery was eventually used to replenish forests elsewhere in Victoria. By 1872 the Macedon nursery had eighty different exotic trees and more than twenty native species. There were also trial plots in the basin of the Turitable Creek and near the nursery. In 1877 exotic trees were imported from Scotland. By 1880 the Macedon nursery was completely enclosed and in 1883 plantations of black wattle and golden wattle were begun. Californian and Himalayan timber trees were planted and an experimental plot of fifty acres set aside for imported forest trees. During 1888 six thousand trees were planted at Macedon and plantings continued for several years but were abandoned during the 1890s. Three nurseries were managed by the state between 1900 and 1914. Between them, the Creswick, Macedon and Broadford nurseries raised more than one quarter of a million plants during 1911-12. By 1914 more than three million were raised. Yet many of these experiments faltered and, in the long run, the nursery did not live up to expectations. A report on the nursery in 1904 noted that: 'as regards the raising of trees for general distribution, Macedon has not been happily chosen as a site for a general nursery.'[12]

Apparently the plants grown at Macedon were unfit for transplanting to the north of the state. The revitalisation of forests depended on the work of another state nursery at Creswick. Yet the new science of forestry had already made its mark on the area. Throughout the towns plantings of exotic trees changed to appearance of otherwise bald streets. And in the forests to the west of Mount Macedon, especially beyond Bullengarook, increased control of state officials gradually led to reduced illegal cutting and some growth in stands of timber so that, by 1904, it appeared that there was a 'gradual encroachment of thick belts of young timber on the lower slopes and foothills of the mountain ranges'.[13] The threat to forested areas remained and, in 1903 the Cyclopedia of Victoria demanded that at Macedon the government must

> rigorously preserve the forests from degradation by the rapacious timber-cutter unless we are willing to see Victoria degenerate into an arid desert which has been the fate of the most fruitful provinces of the old Roman empire.[14]

Experimental forestry was concentrated around Macedon, but there were other changes taking place in the landscape of the broader area between Gisborne, Woodend and Romsey. Residents at Mount Macedon had introduced exotic species into the mountains. Conifers were planted by those taking up land and, on some of the larger properties, owners cultivated rhododendrons and holly. Charles Ryan, owner of one property on the mount, had brought plants from around the globe to Mount Macedon, 'deodars of the Himalayas, gigantic pines of the Yosemite Valley to the yews and hollies of old England'.[15]

Mountain holidays

Over the last one hundred years Mount Macedon has become recognised as a pleasant holiday resort within easy reach of Melbourne. During the 1870s, the prominent Williamstown banker and politician George Verdon travelled to Macedon, hoping to take advantage of Land Selection regulations to a site for a rural retreat. Verdon purchased land under section 49 of the 1860 land acts and was subject to regulations requiring him to plant ten acres of trees. Verdon named his property 'Alton', after 'Alton Towers,' the gothic mansion completed by Pugin for the Earl of Shrewsbury in England. He developed a garden around his property, the design of which was influenced by Baron von Mueller. When J.A. Froude visited Mount Macedon in the 1880s, he described Alton as ' a most handsome mansion surrounded by well-timbered grounds...in the winter, this highland home is sometimes swathed in snow... In summer the heat of the sun is tempered by fresh keen air of the mountain'.

Baron Von Mueller even visited the mount in 1883 'to endeavour shaking off this dreadful cough'. By then many of the urban elite were convinced that a few days in the rarefied air of Macedon would cure them of the ills of city-living.[16] Amongst prominent Melburnians, David Syme had taken up land under selection acts at Mount Macedon, using his 'selection' as a mountain resort rather than as a farm.[17] Other wealthy Melburnians took legal means of obtaining their holiday houses on Mount Macedon, making the peak and the road upwards from Macedon itself a close parallel to the hill stations of the British Raj in India. The hill station character of Mount Macedon stemmed in a large part from the Victorian governor's choice of Mount Macedon as a summer retreat. The wooden cottage of David Syme was purchased in 1886 as a summer residence for the governor, Sir Henry Loch. Plans were then drawn up to create a new residence, two storeyed and half-timbered in the Gothic style. At about the same time a new house was being erected on Mount Macedon for Carl Pinschoff. Over the following two decades the character of the wooded and wild Mount Macedon was changed as other prominent Melbournians followed the governor in seeking to build uplands retreats on the southern slopes.

> The advantages presented by Mount Macedon as a place of summer residence to those inhabitants of Melbourne who could afford to indulge in the luxury of a country residence became obvious thirty years ago.

So reported the *Cyclopedia of Victoria* at the turn of the century. From the peak there were views back towards the Victorian alps and down across the flat plain to Melbourne...

> though forty miles away Port Phillip seems almost at one's feet, its ever-restless water stilled with Melbourne lying upon its shores and stretching a tangled maze of streets to its most distant suburbs.[18]

As at Mount Macedon, at Riddells Creek, the climate and surrounds were coming to be seen as a perfect antidote to the degenerating tendencies of urban life.

> Delicate people and children withered by the hot air of the city and suburbs reacquired their bloom and freshness, lost the languor and lassitude to which they might have previously succumbed, once they had holidayed at Macedon and surrounds.[19]

Destroying a landscape

Cool breezes, views and mountain trees brought holiday-makers to the area. But the cool breezes and sea air wafting inland did not always temper summer heat. One of the recurrent forces shaping the landscape of the district has been fire. In 1851, again in 1905 and 1939, and most recently in 1983, huge fires have raged through the mountain forest and farmland. Vincent Buckley left a gripping account of the bushfires of 1939 as they raged around Romsey.

> For those weeks we lived in an exploded bowl...the Melbourne hills started to burn with dozens killed in the fires...this is what I could see from the slopes above Romsey as we all waited for the cool change, and when it came that time, it was with the unfamiliar smell of drench and rot, a humid pretend-cooling before the real air started to make its faint spirals on the skin.[20]

In 1904 and 1905 fires destroyed pasture and stock around the Black Range. Fire threatened Gisborne in 1944 and in January 1973 bushfires raced through parts of the study area. The fires of 1 February and 16 February 1983 brought devastation not seen since 1939 and Black Friday. This unpredictable and often uncontrollable burning of landscape and buildings around Macedon, Gisborne and Woodend has always remained a key force in shaping this world. At the same time the undeniable attractions of the hills, away from the city yet close to it, have been powerful enough to attract commuters more than holiday makers. While tourism made little broad impact on the landscape at the turn of the century the new waves of suburbanites like the old waves of fire may in the long run emerge as the dominant force reshaping the appearance of the shires around Mount Macedon.

As Victoria came out of the Depression of the 1930s, the towns of the Mecedon region continued as small and largely removed from the life of the metropolitan area. Over the following fifty years the Macedon area became more closely tied to the big city. However, so long as Melbourne sprawled to the south-east rather than to the north, the Macedon area retained that distinctive balance of farming, forest and gardens surrounding small towns. In 1994, even after taking into account the slow growth (even decline) in Victorian population in the early 1990s, population in the area is expected to at least double between 1993 and 2020. Metropolitan expansion has swung steadily to the northern corridor.

Already existing subdivisions are spreading across open farmland and into forests. Recent attempts at subdivision in several shires have drawn bitter opposition and at least one has been abandoned. Changes to planning legislation and a more open and rapid avenue for developers will result from recent alterations to planning and building legislation and from alteration to appeals procedures. The historical texture of the Macedon region, relying as it does on a fortunate balancing of traces from several successive historical activities, is unique, unmatched by other fringe areas around metropolitan Melbourne. The suburban juggernaut can easily sweep away most of that distinctive historical landscape. Clearing of windbreaks, new residential allotments with contemporary road patterns and building form, and the breaking of the clear divisions between town and country are already changing the region, key consequences of the northward movement of the metropolitan boundary.

Writing in *The Public Historian* in 1991 Madeline Cirilo Archer claimed that we turn to holistic preservation when 'lifestyles and ecology have been threatened by rapid development and growth, and where the preservation of open space is essential to the integrity of historic buildings and sites'.[21] On the northern fringe of Melbourne, and widely recognised for its special human and environmental qualities, the present landscape of Macedon will change radically during the next decade. How well can the present forested, farm and village environment be protected? The past 160 years of European settlement have left distinctive traces on the landscape of the area. At the same time there are sites which reflect the culture of the pre-European peoples of the area and others in which remnant flora reflect the character of the area prior to European occupation. If the history of the area is to remain visible in the Year 2020, then future subdivision will need to be carefully integrated into existing landscape units. Otherwise an ever-expanding urban frontier will erase, more completely than have the pick or axe or even bushfire, much of the rare historical landscape of Macedon.

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The Simla of the South

by Paul Fox

This paper explores the cultural implications of imagining Macedon as mount, garden-forest and antipodean hill station. It examines how Macedon, created by scientific idealism and the exotic, was part of the formulation of space which translated the topos into a universal, idealistic landscape of empire.

The paper also examines how, over time, myth and memory shaped Macedon so that scientific, aesthetic and imperial languages which shaped the initial representation of Macedon's gardens continued to be influential in the landscape discourse of this country. When Macedon was spoken of, it described a landscape paradigm.

Today Macedon asks us to re-view what we see and speak of. It asks us to leave the mountain and conceive of another prospect beyond the cultural memory of the hill station.

This paper takes its title from the colonial novelist and son of an East India Company official Rolf Boldrewood's *Old Melbourne Memories* (published in 1884) wherein Macedon was described as an antipodean hill station, as 'the Simla of Victoria'.

Boldrewood's first impression of Macedon in the 1840s as a ruined castle[1] is equally revealing. It suggests the associations which Macedon engendered in the nineteenth century were not static but changed over time from typical picturesque invocations to imperial likenesses. What then does this change signify?

It suggests that initially Macedon was not conceived of as a garden. It was nature, rather than cultivation, which commended the site to Gerald Krefft, a scientific member of the 1857 expedition to the Murray River, who recommended Macedon as a place of sport where city gentlemen might indulge in hunting amidst the tree ferns.[2]

Krefft's perception of place as uncultivated nature reflects a romanticism, not unlike Boldrewood's picturesque metaphor, for during the 1850s the forest was changed dramatically by the discovery of gold and the accompanying demand for timber. These changes to the forest continued. In 1869, when the Melbourne financier J.B. Were made application for land near the southern boundary of the Macedon State Forest, together with Dr Howitt (also an amateur naturalist), merchant and member of the Victorian Legislative Council James Graham, lawyer, George Traill, politician Archibald Michie, and editor of the *Age* newspaper David Syme, the timber there had already been removed from this land for sawmilling purposes.[3] By 1874 the only mill still operating on that side of the range was at Devils Hole – 'mill after mill having ceased as the timber became exhausted'.[4] Still, enormous quantities of timber were taken out of the Macedon forest in that year. In 1874 the Bullarook and Macedon forests had twenty sawmills which supplied Melbourne each month with one and a half million feet of timber while the goldfields towns of Castlemaine, Sandhurst and Maryborough were supplied with three quarters of a million feet.[5]

These gentlemen wished to establish summer residences at Macedon. They conceived of Macedon as a sanatorium[6]. From Upper Macedon, professor Herbert Strong wrote of 'the pure mountain air' and how after convalescing, his wife and child were 'looking forward with anything but pleasure to descending to Melbourne again'. Here the rhetoric of the Indian hill station is being indirectly used to imagine the Australian landscape; a significant change in perception from the earlier view of Anglo-Indians who in the 1840s saw Tasmania and Western Australia as places of furlough for those debilitated by the Indian climate.

Another significant change which occurred at this time was that nature was turned into a garden. Syme's first action on being granted his Macedon selection was to fence the fern gully on his land to protect it from fern getters. Nature was also to be restored; timber removed from the site was to be replaced by 'no less than 50 coniferous trees of such kinds as afford useful timber' which 'if judiciously grouped would tend to the improvement of the lots'. The languages of utility and aesthetics established Macedon's exclusivity and checked 'any renewal of applications for the portions of the State forest by ordinary applicants'.[7]

Macedon was also shaped by scientific experiment. For instance Syme showed an awareness of contemporary colonial scientific thought when he proposed as a condition of the grant that he would plant 'any sort of trees the Board may suggest or wish to have grown by way of experiment'. He was acquainted with the writings of the government botanist, Ferdinand Mueller whose 'official reports to the Board referred to the climate as being suitable for growing such plants as tea, coffee and cinchonae'. Syme also undertook to place himself in communication with Mueller and offered 'to test any such plants he might recommend'.[8] In the early 1870s the colony's gentlemen scientists, including the University Professors McCoy, Strong and Nansen, together with the Director of the Melbourne Observatory, Robert Ellery and the Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, had all selected land at Macedon on the condition they plant 'useful timber trees' including the sacred cedar of India, *Cedrus deodara*.[9]

Syme and his scientific colleagues, informed by theories of acclimatisation, saw the colonial garden not only as a retreat but also as being informed by a system of ideas where science and utility complemented beauty.

Scientific analysis of the mount in terms of climate, altitude and soils was important in determining how nature could be changed into the ideal landscape of the garden forest. As Ferguson reported in 1870, Macedon possessed 'a climate and soils peculiarly favourable for the growth of non-indigenous trees',[10] a perception which led two acres of the newly established Macedon State Nursery in 1872 being planted with thousands of 'the choicest and best kinds of Himalyan and Californian timber trees'. The following year these experiments continued when 50 acres near the summit 'were selected for experimential culture of forest trees, large numbers of deodars, Himalyan spruce and silver firs, for the culture of which the high altitude of the locality are well adapted'.[11] Macedon, as an experimental station, witnessed the creation of forests reminiscent of the Himalayas and California.

The resultant relationship of the garden to the forest was a recurrent motif of nineteenth century Macedon. There the garden contrasted with what the Inspector of State Forests,

William Ferguson described in 1870 as the 'large areas of State Forest Reserves at Macedon already denuded of timber'.[12] It was a relationship often commented on by visitors to Macedon.

When ethnographer and author of *Random Rot: a Journal of three Years' Wanderings about the World,* Edge Partington in 1879 visited Derriweit Heights, the Macedon garden of Charles Ryan, he commented that 'the contrast of the wild bush beyond only added to the beauty of the garden'.[13] The forest also caught the attention of lady painter and photographer, the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos. Visiting Macedon in 1892 as a guest of the Victorian Governor the Earl of Hopetoun, she noted 'sometimes you see a whole side of a hill covered with skeleton trees, as the colonists to make a clearing, ring the trees...thus killing them; and sometimes forest fires have occurred and some of these giant skeletons are all charred and present a sad and pitiful spectacle'.[14] This landscape contrasted with the Macedon garden retreat which in the case of the lowest part of Charles Ryan's garden had literally replaced the forest after it had been burnt by bushfires in 1878.[15]

Ryan, by replacing despoiled nature with the artificial contrivance of the garden, created an idyll which provided the elite with a language by which to discuss the landscape beyond the garden. When Edge Partington walked to a waterfall beyond the garden, accompanied by Ryan's daughter Ellis Rowan, he witnessed 'all the ferns completely despoiled' by the 'wretched pic-nickers'. By contrast Derriweit Heights protected 'a winding gully where a small stream ran' which was enhanced by 'all sorts of ferns, collected at different timed both here, and in Tasmania and New Zealand'.[16] The Macedon garden, as conceived by the educated colonist, protected nature from the uninformed mass who would destroy it.

The view of Macedon offered by private visitors like Partington and the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos was very different to that popularised through the colonial newspaper. While the Melbourne press revealed Ryan's taste by describing unique plant specimens growing in the garden, Edge Partington disclosed the intimacies of the Ryans' private world; at Derriweit he came across for the first time in Australia 'old English engravings and some old china'.[17] A man who in wild places was of the opinion 'it is the fear of the revolver that brings men to their senses',[18] was put at ease at Macedon by signs of civilisation.

Partington's work was printed for private circulation only. By contrast, the press pieces written by garden designer and nurseryman, William Sangster[19] illustrate how the private domain of Macedon was translated for public consumption by botanical journalism. As a Macedon nurseryman and garden designer, Sangster was well placed to read the plant and garden not only botanically but also as signs of culture, science and possession. At Derriweit he not only comments on 'the rare Himalyan *Rhododendron* 'Dalhousie' with creamy white bellflowers eight inches across but also tests, and finds wanting, the nexus between the luxuriance of the original forest cover and agricultural productivity. He reports how it had been incorrectly 'expected that ground which produced timber over three hundred feet in height would also give an abundance of fruit' when planted with orchards; recounting how the site had been selected 'for orchard purposes by an old axeman who had assisted to fell many a forest giant on this and neighbouring selections'.[20]

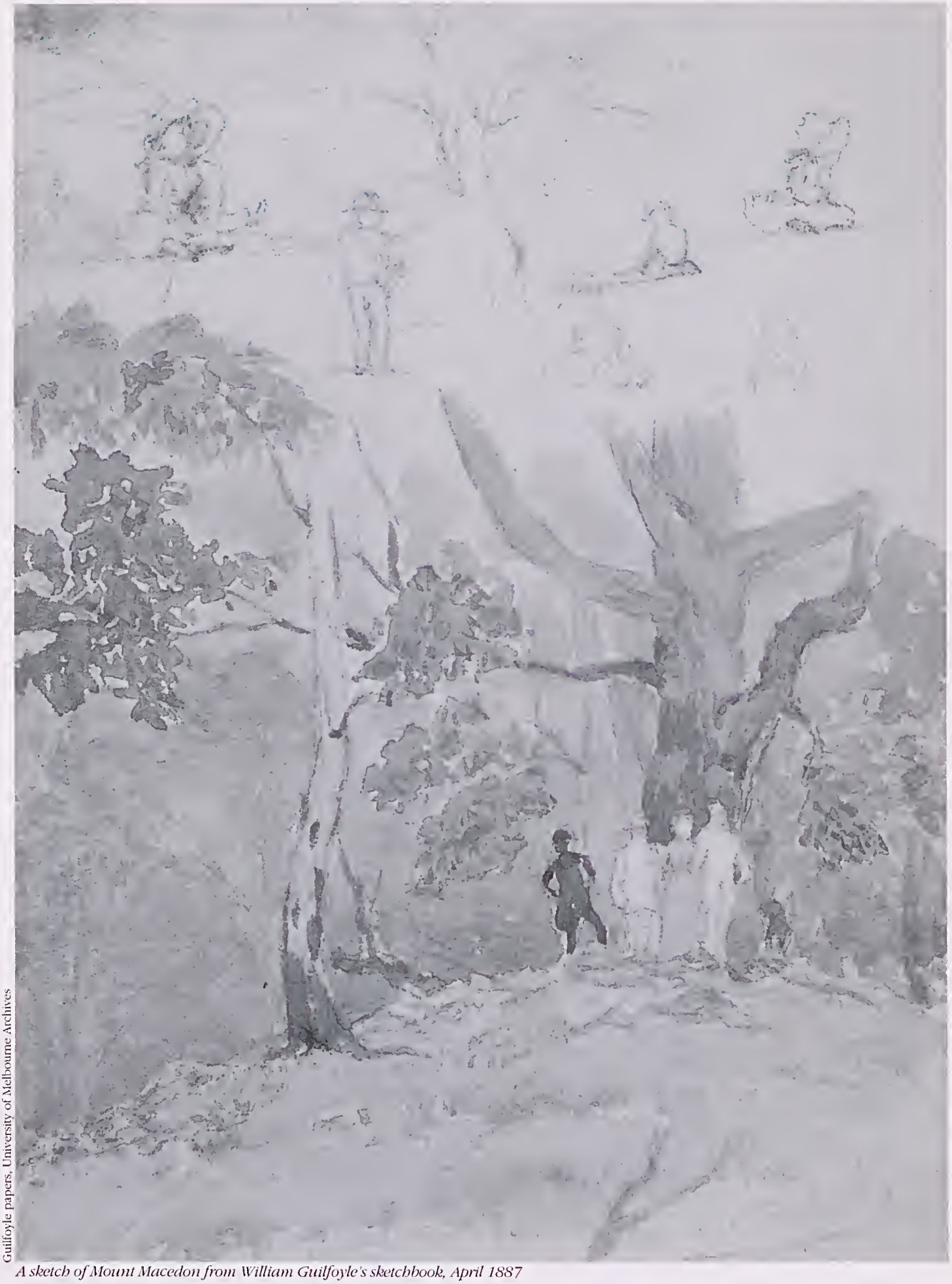
The press characterised the Macedon garden by its rare plants. In 1881 the Melbourne *Leader* described Ryan's garden as having plants 'not possessed by anyone else' in the colony.[21] Ryan actively encouraged this perception by seeking out rare plants throughout the globe. During his 1882 travels to England and Europe, he visited the United States so as to 'obtain many other species than those kept in English nurseries'.[22]

Macedon, with its deodars, Himalayan spruce, Assam tea, Rhododendron Dalhousie, and Indian ducks on the State Nursery lake[23] had been re-created in the image of an Indian hill station by the time the Governor, Henry Loch rented David Syme's property Rosenheim as a temporary summer retreat in 1884. Like Simla, Macedon now came to be defined by the vice-regal presence. This association was confirmed when the Victorian government purchased Syme's property, after Ryan and his brother-in-law, Sir William Clarke had persuaded the governor of the need for a permanent Macedon residence.[24] The resultant identification of Macedon with Simla was further enhanced in 1886 when a new two storey residence in 'tudor style architecture'[25] – remarkably similar to Snowden, the official Simla residence (from 1885) of the Commander-in-Chief in India – was built at Macedon.[26]

'The view from the Governor's Residence', sketch by Lady Loch, subsequently published in the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia *(1886)*



Paul Fox collection



Guilfoyle papers, University of Melbourne Archives

A sketch of Mount Macedon from William Guilfoyle's sketchbook, April 1887

The British experience of the Indian sub-continent defined Macedon in other ways. In 1881 tea plants from Assam were planted in a six acre extension to the State Nursery,[27] followed in 1884 by the introduction of cinchona and jute seeds collected during that year at the Calcutta International Exhibition.[28]

This reduction of the globe to imperial simulacra allowed Boldrewood to picture Macedon as an Indian hill station, the Governor's residence to bestow Macedon with the imperial associations of Simla, and Australian travellers to liken Indian hill stations to Macedon. When Alfred Deakin, a member of the colony's political elite, travelled to the Himalayan hill station at Darjeeling in 1890, he jotted in his diary: 'cleared patches of garden and dry grass like Macedon – gardens on steep slopes and crests of hills. Lies beyond the plain influence – an upland oasis of cool'.[29] Similarly Boldrewood, writing in 1884, compared its 'cooler air and lower heat' with the plain below where 'all plant and animal nature alike suffer from the unpitying sun'.[30] Through the use of shared imperial metaphors, Boldrewood and Deakin could assert the primacy of their caste's claims to the colonial landscape.

In this way the private preserve of the garden was invested with authorative public meanings. Macedon's gardens were seen not only in terms of the taste and wealth of the garden owner but also as imperial metaphor. Derriweit illustrates this. Whilst Ryan created Derriweit as the archetype hill station garden, his daughter Ellis Rowan symbolises the imperial expeditioning that procured the new, the rare and the exotic which distinguished Ryan's garden as the foremost garden of the colony. As the Duchess of Buckingham recounted, Rowan, 'one of the best flower painters in the world, told her of her adventurous journeys in search of specimens, she having visited wild parts of Queensland and the islands where no lady had ever been'.[31]

Here Rowan is portrayed as belonging to the male world of exploration, discovering both terra and flora incognita. For Rowan what lay beyond her father's private garden was the imperial landscape which empowered her to paint, collect plants and discover the unknown. This imperial acquisition of knowledge involved the translation of indigenous understandings into the European languages of science and aesthetics. According to the Duchess, Rowan made 'friends with the natives and got them to procure her rare plants' and educated them in her needs. 'She generally has to get them to escort her to the place' as 'she says their idea of helping is to pull handfuls of blossoms so she can rarely paint what they bring her'.[32] The search for the unillustrated flower led Rowan to picture indigenous geographies as European landscape so that many of her paintings depict both flower and landscape.[33]

At Derriweit, Rowan created her own domestic space. Edge Partington recounted 'there is a delicious little room leading out to a fernery into which the dining room leads. In this Mrs Rowan does all her painting'. Rowan also decorated much of the room painting a frieze of cats and frogs, one of which Partington reported was 'an exact image of a (male?) friend' of his.[34]

It is usual to consider Macedon as a site created by men; yet women travellers and artists defined Macedon. For



Collection: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery

Madame Buvelot painting, Monsieur Pfund reading, c.1870-73, sketch by Thomas Clark possibly at the Buvelot's Mount Macedon retreat

instance Lady Loch (wife of the first governor to take up residence at Macedon) sketched Macedon from the verandah of the vice-regal residence[35] whilst Madame Buvelot is seen, in Thomas Clark's 1873 pencil sketch, painting scenery above the fireplace possibly at the Pfund's Macedon retreat.[36] Macedon is pictured for a mass audience by the governor's wife, whose Macedon sketch was subsequently published in the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia,* as well by male artists like Louis Buvelot whose *Morning at Macedon,* composed of 'a few gum trees, a water hole and a distant mountain range', was reproduced in the *Australian Illustrated News*.[37] Similarly, newspaper travel writer and art critic, James Smith turned to Ellis Rowan to inquire as to the presence of 'picturesque but little known walks about Macedon'.[38]

Away from the public gaze, Macedon was also another place. It was a retreat where even the Governor, the Earl of Hopetoun, like some antipodean echo of Marie Antoinette playing milkmaid, dressed as a jackeroo.[39] Yet the private could become part of public discourse. The only time Sangster writes of Macedon's domestic space as a journalist is to describe the drawing room belonging to an aesthete bachelor, Sir George Verdon. Designed by Verdon to advertise the beauty of colonial woods, Sangster perceives the room not as a private apartment but as part of the public discourse concerning forests. He relates Alton's timbered interior to its garden, 'a valuable experimental

plantation that has not cost the country a single penny'.[40]

Sangster's is a political commentary. Six years earlier, after 'trenchant criticism',[41] ten thousand acres of the Macedon state forest was thrown open to selection in 1879, despite the soil's unsuitability for agriculture. Only a thousand acres was preserved for the summer residences of Melbourne merchants.[42]

Thus the Macedon garden, conceived from its inception by a leisured cognescenti as a parody of the Selection Act's intention to provide a livelihood for the selector who was expected to clear the land of its forest cover; now stood as a rebuke to governments which allowed the destruction of state forests. Macedon, conceived and claimed as an imperial site, was a signifier of the colonial elite's critique of democratic practice.

As Joel Sydner has argued in *Territorial Photographs*, claims to the national landscape of nineteenth century America were related to a 'knowledge-hungry, acquisitive and aggressive scientific-professional class'.[43] A class can define a territory. At Macedon, despite the 1879 loss over selection, the imperial language by which this group claimed its authority to see and speak continued to exert influence over the official discourse. When another report on forests was commissioned in 1896, the government turned to the Inspector-General of Forests to the Government of India, Rippontrop.

One hears echoes of earlier cited opinions in his assessment: 'the reason for the self-evident mismanagement of the forest property of the colony are well known, and were in fact first pointed out to me by independent colonials; they are political and centre in the disregard of the general public weal where this clashes with monetary profits of individuals or classes who can exert direct parliamentary influence'.[44]

The garden is about vision. At Macedon the hill garden acted as mount to survey the lie of the land. Macedon's geographical designation as a mount also recalls the garden mount found in seventeenth century gardens and in nineteenth century colonial gardens such as Ripponlea. A mount is about power. Those who own the garden also have the right to the prospect they can see: whilst those excluded from the private domain may only look at the mount from a distance. It is only through reading newspapers or illustrated journals that some picture of it can be gained. Macedon thus exists in the imagination, simultaneously known and unsighted, a colonial site created by global, imperial symbols.

What Macedon represents is a view of the self in the landscape. It tells how language, science and power create a picture. If there is to be a new view created in this country, a different language of vision will need to be developed. The first step may be to come down off the mountain and sight a different prospect.

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THE FOREST RESOURCE OF THE MACEDON RANGES

by **F.R. MOULDS**

THE FORESTS of the Macedon Ranges are the residuals of a large forested area along the Dividing Range, including the Wombat Forest of the Daylesford and Woodend region. They comprise stringy bark, peppermint and gum forests on the lower slopes and mountain ash, alpine ash and snow gum on the upper slopes and summit. The principal differences between the southern and northern aspects of the Ranges are that the south has no ironbark and box species (grey, yellow or black) whilst the north has no mountain ash or alpine ash forests.

These forests were dedicated as State Forest and Timber Reserves at different stages in the 1870s, when it was realised by the Victorian Government that the enormous demands for timber during the gold rush period, and later for railway sleepers and bridge timbers, had largely denuded the accessible forests. As a further step to rectify the situation, the Government established the State Nursery at Macedon in 1872. Its task was to raise, plant, and distribute suitable trees for re-forestation of areas such as Mount Macedon. This site had been virtually cut out after almost thirty years of saw-milling activities (from the 1850s) by no less than thirty sawmills. The location of these are shown in a booklet recently published by the Gisborne and Mount Macedon Historical Society, written by Barney Hutton and myself, titled *Macedon Ranges: a History of the Forests and their People*. The State Nursery has been operating continuously since 1872, although it was re-built after being completely destroyed in the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires. Numerous other private nurseries were established both before and after the 1870s and have contributed very greatly to the diversity of flora in the Macedon Ranges region.

The first report on the State Nursery, written in 1873 by the then Conservator of Forests, Mr William Ferguson, makes interesting reading, especially regarding the tree species he saw as useful for this area. He comments in his 1873 report:

> About two acres of the trenched ground is now planted with thousands of the choicest and best kinds of Himalayan and Californian timber trees...considerable numbers of the best kinds of English and American timber trees are being planted in nursery rows...quantities of acorns from old trees have been sown, also white thorn and several other kinds of hedge plants...quantities of the best kinds of elm, plane and other deciduous tress that are best grown from cuttings will be put in the ground immediately...Fifty acres near the summit of Mount Macedon will be planted with large numbers of the deodar cedar, the Himalayan spruce, and silver firs as well as European timber trees...a considerable portion of the Macedon Ranges is entirely denuded of timber and presents a good opportunity for testing many of the timber trees of Europe.

Perhaps strangely to us now, the only Australian species suggested were jarrah and red gum, although wattle cultivation was intensively canvassed and carried out in the 1880s to try to ensure bark supplies for the tanning industry (an unsuccessful venture). Even tea planting was solidly supported, and also the chicory industry: Baron Von Mueller was a great supporter of new species introductions. Special reserves were sometimes set aside, such as the chicory plantation at Riddells Creek in the foothills of the Macedon Ranges.

In addition to Government and private nursery activities, and parallelling them in many ways, during the late 1870s and for the following two or three decades, many hill station properties were established on Mount Macedon. These were mostly – but not entirely – situated on the sheltered southerly slopes. The soil conditions and cool summer climate were quickly recognised as being ideal for the growing of a wide range of European and American trees, both conifers and broad leaved species. Many New Zealand trees and shrubs were also established during this period in particular gardens, such as the 'Karori'. The number of unusual and rare tree species planted during this period is quite remarkable. The Mount Macedon dwellers were an adventurous lot in developing their gardens.

The Government continued to experiment with a wide range of commercial timber species through the Macedon State Nursery. However, the principal species used for departmental plantings narrowed down over the next fifty years or so. *Pinus radiata* dominated, with some oregon (Douglas fir), and limited plantings of spruce, cedars, cypresses, redwoods and a small range of oaks, maples and beeches.

There is occasionally some speculation about the reasons for the concentration on a relatively few tree species. The reasons were entirely commercial and windbreak and shelter-belt oriented.

The principal remaining public forest areas on the Mount are now included in the Macedon Regional Park. This will continue to be developed in the future, mainly as a recreation and conservation area with walking tracks, look-outs, picnic areas and the like. The total area of the Regional Park is 3,290 hectares. A special area within the Park is the small 1.9 hectare reserve surrounding the Memorial Cross at the top of Mount Macedon. The Cross and reserve gardens were built by Mr William Cameron of Cameron Lodge at Mount Macedon and were officially opened in 1935 by the then Premier of Victoria, Sir Stanley Argyle. Cameron also financed the construction of Cameron Drive, which led to the Cross, and provided a fund for the maintenance of the Cross and gardens which continued until last year.

Mr Cameron's proposed construction of the Cross is succinctly laid out in a letter from his representatives to the Secretary of the State Forests Commission:

> Dear Mr Strahan,
>
> I have been asked by Mr William Cameron. 'Cameron Lodge', Upper Macedon, to ascertain the proper steps to be taken to obtain an authorization for his proposal to erect an Australian Soldier's Memorial, in the shape of a plain Latin Cross in Stawell Marble, on the top of Mount Macedon. The cross is to be 30 feet high, and so illuminated by electric light that it will be visible on a clear night from Melbourne.
>
> It would be made accessible for tourists by a circular raised platform, approached by a flight of steps from a carriageway. I take the liberty to approach you in this manner, and wish to assure you that whatever details you may require will be observed, in the event of the permission being obtained.
>
> Yours truly,
>
> J.M. & H.E. Coane & Anderson.

Within six weeks Cameron had received permission and was starting work, a primary objective of the project being



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Plan of State Nursery Macedon

the provision of work for unemployed.

Along with the Cross, in 1983 the small inlier of exotic vegetation which Cameron had developed as a garden was destroyed by fire. The area is now under consideration for restoration by the Trustees for the Appeal for the Restoration, Development and Maintenance of the Memorial Cross. This subject is at present being discussed by the Trustees with the Historic Buildings Council (HBC), which has listed the Cross and immediate surrounds on its Register so that reconstruction work is appropriately guided. The Cross is important not only as a memorial for those who lost their lives in the First World War, but also because 'it became for many a symbol of courage and survival after the 1983 Ash Wednesday bush fires'. The HBC citation states: 'the size, simplicity of the design of the Cameron Memorial Cross, along its siting on Mount Macedon, is a rare example of a memorial commemorating those who died in the First World War'.

Perhaps we can say now that the Macedon Ranges has matured as a landscape with its integration of gardens into the natural beauty of the forested surrounds. In a recent issue of *English Country Life*, Marcus Worsley stated:

> What is needed are forests of diversity which will end up as forestry of delight. Never should a forester approach a woodland site with pre-conceived ideas in his mind. Rather he should approach it with humility, to hear what the site has to say to him and then use his expertise to respond.
>
> Foresters and gardeners should now unite in using their skills and endeavours to make the very best of the unique of the Macedon Ranges. Some of the early gardeners, especially those of Scottish origin, had a mixed forestry and horticultural background, and must have appreciated the chance to develop their gardening skills in a forest environment. Similarly, the generations of foresters who were based at the Macedon State Nursery, such as the Firths, Venvilles, Bickers, Ords, Incolls and Franklins, contributed through their work an extra dimension to the cultivation of gardens in the area.

The 1983 Ash Wednesday tragedy showed that fire is still the number one threat. At Macedon the forest resource has changed dramatically. The snow gum stands were almost completely burnt over, but have recovered well – their regeneration is by ligno-tuberous growths and from natural seed distribution. Unlike stringy barks, manna gums, peppermints, and other gums, snow gums do not have dormant buds under the bark which give rise to adventitious growths or coppice shoots and the subsequent development of a new crown. One plus is that the alpine ash extended its range in the Regional Park by natural seed-fall after the fires, spreading even into areas formally occupied by pine plantations. The regenerated stands of alpine ash are healthy and vigorous, growing at the rate of about one metre in height per year. Natural systems dictate that alpine ash and snow gum must have at least twelve to fifteen years free of fire to ensure long term survival. After eleven years these trees are still not bearing seed, so another fire this summer would be disastrous.



Gregory Moore

Scorched Eucalypt forest, Mount Macedon 24 February 1983

In summary, because of the fires there has been a total loss of almost all the generally mature alpine ash and snow gum. The appearance of the snow gum and alpine ash forests has been completely changed – they are covered with a 'nurse-crop' of nitrogen fixing acacias which will protect the young eucalypts before eventually dying out. However, natural regeneration has been good, with successful crown renewal of the mixed stringy bark/gum/peppermint forests. The acacia seeds were obviously in the ground awaiting a fire for their germination.

The boundaries of vegetation on the Macedon Ranges have now become fairly securely established in a manner similar to many parts of United Kingdom and Europe. Forests occupy the upper slopes and are only occasionally broken by high level private property inliers, or by grazing properties, cultivation, small holdings and hobby farms on the lower slopes. Town planning statutes will endeavour to maintain this pattern against some pressure for further subdivisions. Current restructuring of local Government boundaries will tend to show whether the Gisborne Shire, for instance, remains predominately rural as the current Council desires, or will be caught up in the current and future expansion of the metropolis. The cost and availability of water supply will be a key factor in any future expansion, and may even affect the range of species to be cultivated in the longer term. It is also possible that the current Regional Park covering much of the ranges natural forest may be up-graded to a State Park, thus giving more authority to its management in the future.

A further boost to the diversity of planted species in the region has recently been given by the Shire of Gisborne's decision to establish a Botanic Gardens in a bend of Jackson's Creek in Gisborne, opposite the municipal offices. The Gardens will feature New Zealand trees and shrubs and some 200 or so have already been planted in co-operation with the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. The theme is partly a recognition of the sister city relationship with Gisborne in New Zealand.

Finally, I would like to read a newspaper reference titled 'Macedon State Forest after the Fire':

> Though the Macedon State Forest has not been irreparably injured by the recent fire, serious damage has been done both to exotics and native trees...There are now fully 12 miles of fire-breaks, from half a chain to a chain wide...The various breaks would under ordinary circumstances check fires, but they were nearly useless in such a violent gale as that of Sunday the 5th inst. Witnesses say they saw bark and sparks carried 400 yards from trees 150ft high.
>
> The fire seems to have started on the north side of the mount, and it was probably caused by picnickers. A celebrated 'beauty spot' has been seriously marred, Lady Loch's four-mile drive is disfigured, and the 'Lilac Walk', so named from the abundance of the native lilac (*Prostanthera lasianthos*), is very much spoilt.

This was not a report of the Ash Wednesday fires, but an extract from the *Australasian* newspaper dated 25 January, 1896 – almost 100 years ago. Some things never change.

The Early Nursery Industry in the Macedon Ranges

by FRANCINE GILFEDDER

IN A REGION of such agricultural and horticultural importance as the Macedon Ranges, it is interesting to examine the historical development of the horticultural industry to understand its cultural associations with not only the great gardens and broader landscape of the nineteenth century, but its lasting impact on the Ranges today.

I am indebted to Barney Hutton and other members of the Gisborne & Macedon and District Historical Society for much of the detailed research, such as chasing up numerous newspaper references and copying early photographs of the nurseries discussed in this paper. It was their early efforts which sowed the seeds as far as the present extent of our knowledge of the horticultural history of Macedon.

The development of the horticultural industry is associated with the general settlement of the Macedon Ranges, starting with the development of townships after the sale of Crown Land in the 1850s and the construction of the railway from Melbourne to Bendigo, the Northern Trunk Line as it was called, in the early 1860s. At the same time, higher up on the mount, the burgeoning timber industry brought more people into the area and resulted in large tracts of land on the mount, previously covered with tall shady trees, being opened to sunlight. The earliest landholders were generally involved with the timber industry, and by the 1860s and 1870s, orchards had been planted on the cleared land. The Macedon State Nursery was established in 1872 to provide trees to replant areas for firewood, building timber, fencing and farm requirements, and to generally improve the forest environment. This nursery was the first public nursery in the State and a number of private nurseries were also established around this time. These included the well known firm of nurserymen, Taylor & Sangster, who commenced operations at Upper Macedon in 1873 and John Smith & Sons of Riddells Creek who had commenced operations some ten years before that, in 1863.

One could adopt a number of approaches to provide some insight into these three most influential nurseries, the State, Taylor & Sangster's and Smith's. This could be biographical, chronological or geographical, or alternatively, by examining the published catalogues to see what plants were being sold. Mr Barney Hutton of Mount Macedon, has already undertaken a considerable amount of research on these nurseries, some of which has been published in the Australian Garden History Society Journals. However, I believe in the short time available it is of greatest value and interest to look at the characteristics shared by these nurseries and those that distinguish them from each other, which make them important in the context of the develop-

View of trees remaining at the State Forest Nursery, Macedon



Francine Gilfedder



W.H. Smith Photography from Francine Gilfedder collection

Reproduction of early photograph of John Smith and Sons Nursery, Riddells Creek

ment of horticulture in Victoria.

I will briefly examine some of the more interesting biographical aspects of the people associated with the nurseries. At the time, the business relationship between Victorian nurserymen was such that in order to make available the considerable range of plants listed in catalogues, cooperation with specialists in the field was essential. Finally, and probably of most interest to those at this Conference, I will examine the legacy to modern gardeners from these nurseries and show that these three operations of the 1860s and 1870s were responsible for sowing the seeds for the development of the unique horticultural heritage of the Macedon Ranges. Unfortunately, since the Ash Wednesday fires, there is a much reduced number of trees and nursery remnants of this renowned locality, but plants originally introduced by these nurseries are now grown widely throughout the State.

State Nursery

In 1872, the State Nursery was surveyed by John Lardner, and commenced operations that year under William Ferguson, who had been appointed Overseer of Forests in 1869. The following year, 1873, the site was reserved which comprised 41 acres of land, a stone cottage and office and two timber cottages, for Ferguson and his staff. A few years later, in 1875, a stable and forge were built and by 1901, the size of the site had increased to 91 acres.

William Ferguson was appointed the first manager of the nursery and he became the Conservator for Forests for the State. McLelland, a Scot, was the second manager, holding the position from 1872 until 1881. Joseph Firth was manager for a remarkable forty years from 1881 to 1921, a legacy which is recognised by Firth Park, located between Bullengarook and Trentham.

The nursery was considered a successful enterprise and, by 1901, three other Government nurseries had been established in Creswick, Havelock and Tintarra. In 1919, in a structural re-organisation, the Forests Commission took over administration of the nursery.

In its production of trees of many different species which were widely distributed throughout the State, the State Nursery was voluminous. Some estimates put the figure at 20 million trees in the first hundred years. The nursery was completely destroyed in the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires. Other than the cast cement Italianate fountain, a lone windmill palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*)

and a few mature conifer trees, any other historic component was lost in the flames.

John Smith & Sons

At Riddells Creek, the private nursery of John Smith & Sons was established as early as 1860 (which is the date given by his catalogue) or possibly 1863 (when the nursery is first listed in the rate books and other records). Smith had trained as a professional horticulturalist in Edinburgh and London and was well equipped to establish his own nursery, along with his four sons. The nursery specialised initially in fruit trees and, some ten to twenty years later, in soft fruits, bulbs, azaleas, rhododendrons, greenhouse plants and orchids.

In the 1860s, John Smith & Sons were large exporters of native trees, plants and seeds to Europe and other countries. Large consignments of tree ferns (presumably from the slopes and creeks of Mount Macedon) were shipped overseas with some extra large specimens being sent to the Imperial Gardens at St. Petersburg, the Winter Palace Gardens at Moscow, and for the garden of the Emperor at Vienna as well as the Royal Gardens at New England, Edinburgh and New York.

The nursery won many horticultural prizes which included, in 1866, first prize at the Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne for strawberries described as 'remarkable for their size and lusciousness'. A prize was won in 1875 at the International Exhibition in Vienna with the apple 'Newton Wonder'. At about this time the nursery was working with 12,000 apple trees on blight proof stock. The range of plants increased significantly, particularly of conifers and oaks (20 species and 50 varieties). The nursery is credited with introducing the first golden oak to Victoria, and possibly the Commonwealth, and this is still a very rare plant in the nursery trade. Of the first batch, only two survived the journey from England. One was given to the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne (thought to have died and since been replaced) and the other is planted on the banks of Riddells Creek, where it is in a neglected state today. Another uncommon plant thought to have been introduced by the nursery was the silver elm (*Ulmus variegata* 'Picturata'). A beautiful and mature specimen, possibly connected to Smith's nursery, grows at the edge of Riddells Creek and the school reserve. The nursery's collection of daffodils and orchids was also quite extensive.

Smith was quite a public figure, involved in various community projects and a frequent correspondent to the newspapers. In one letter of c.1910 to the *Romsey Examiner,* he provides an insight to the impact of the increased local population when he writes about his lack of adequate water supply because of the expanding population at Upper Macedon. More importantly, Smith's letters to the editor provide us with valuable information on the extent of the operations of his nursery and of his fame, even if by his own acclamation since only three catalogues have ever been located, those being for 1871, 1873 and 1881.

In 1869, the *Australasian* probably summed up the importance of the nursery when it stated that the firm had done more towards the cultivation and reliable nomenclature of hardy fruits than all the Horticultural Societies in Victoria put together.

Although the nursery was subject to some significant floods, and was reputedly washed away in 1906, John Smith's sons, Thomas and Walter, carried on the business after John's death in 1886. The rate books record that descendants remained on the property until 1945. The house and garden that remain are possibly one of the earliest private nurseries in the state, which can be compared only to Marriner's of Colac, and the garden is still largely intact.

Early photographs show Walter Smith's house and nursery from a point near the church across the creek. The exotic trees around the nursery are quite mature. and the land along the creek is very open compared with the almost impenetrable vegetation today. Other early photographs show people walking along the gravelled drive, and either side of this many exotic shrubs and trees are displayed in a well developed garden. Another feature of the nursery was the lily pond which was photographed for many postcards and was one of prominent tourist attractions of the Riddells Creek area.

Remnants of the nursery site today are elms, willows, a particularly good specimen of a bunya bunya pine tree as well as mature shrubs. There is a planted semicircular drive (now disused) leading to the main road. The house garden includes two large *Buxus,* a vast exotic tree collection, of *Cedrus, Quercus, Cupressus, Viburnum, Agapanthus, Arbutus, Ceratonia, Cordyline, Pinus pinea, P. canariensis* and *Cedrus atlantica* f. *glauca*. Rock edging along the drive and paths defines the garden beds. There is a large oak near the house along with remnants of a privet hedge. Mature plantings extend out from the garden and along Riddells Creek, continuing along the public reserve that runs through to the main road and the church.

Taylor & Sangster's Nursery, Macedon

This famous nursery operated between 1875 and the 1930s and is now a private garden where the owners are trying to re-establish much of the form of the old nursery display garden after the 1983 fires caused considerable damage, including the loss of the original house.

In 1866, William Taylor, formerly a gardener at Government House, joined with fellow Scot, William Sangster, formerly a gardener at Como, to form Taylor & Sangster's Nursery at Toorak. Both were established gentlemen of the horticultural circles and won prizes at the Intercolonial Exhibition for their conifers, azaleas and ornamental foliage plants. In 1873, Messrs Taylor & Sangster assumed a licence to occupy land at Upper Macedon. This licence was issued subject to the conditional planting of at least ten useful timber trees per acre. Illustrations of this time show adjacent land, where there was a large sawmilling operation, well cleared and open.

Soon after the establishment of their nursery at Macedon, the firm undertook many contracts to design and layout some of the most important of the Macedon gardens, such as Sir George Verdon's Alton, which today still features many of the rare and beautiful trees planted in the mid 1870s. In 1876, Taylor & Sangster acquired freehold title to their 13 acres of land and their application contained a list of species planted in the nursery for permanent display, and those for a second area of nursery stock. Taylor &

Sangster continued to operate the nursery at Toorak as well as Upper Macedon, producing their first catalogue in 1879, although this was specifically for the Toorak site.

Like Smith at Riddells Creek, Sangster used the local press to his advantage and there are many articles describing the business' success, what is being grown, and the local conditions, all of which provide glimpses of how the gardens and plantings at Macedon were developed with the assistance of Taylor & Sangster. In one such article in the *Australasian* of 1883, Sangster comments:

> It is understood by gardeners generally that most of the Melbourne nurserymen possess also nurseries in the colder districts, where the work of raising plants can be more easily carried on than in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis. Such an establishment is the nursery at Upper Macedon of Messrs Taylor and Sangster, of Toorak. The site, which is at about two-thirds of the elevation of the mount, is a block of fourteen acres, sloping generally to the east. The soil is, for the most part, a rich peatmoss chocolate, and in this almost every kind of plant appears to thrive, climate being evidently a more important factor in plant cultivation than the character of the soil. The contour of the ground has prevented the nursery being laid out in prosaic squares, and thus, of necessity, the main drive and the paths have been formed on landscape lines. A spring from the higher ground has been led in front of the cottage, and thence throughout the nursery wherever its services are likely to be needed, rejoining at last the little stream at the lowest part of the ground, where it meanders through a dense mass of ferns. That the mount originally carried some very fine timber is evidenced by the presence of several immense stumps; one of these is prostrate near the creek long served as a bush laundry, affording ample protection in all kinds of weather. Another, still erect, measures 13 feet through at as high as a man can reach. The semi-nude condition of the mount is, from a climatic point of view, very much to be deplored, but the work of clearing is not likely to be stopped; the greater part of the mount has been selected, and will doubtless ere long be the site of numerous pleasant abodes and beautiful gardens... The belt of shrubs and trees on either side of the main drive through the nursery is the principal testing quarter in that property, and very interesting is the stroll through it in the company of the senior partner, who is also for a good portion of the year the resident. To hear that damages sustained by many of the trees were occasioned by heavy snowstorms will astonish habitual dwellers in the lowlands, but we regret to say that in many of the pleasure-grounds on the mount the damage done by snow has been very considerable. Apart from accidents of that character, most of the conifers and deciduous trees grown in Great Britain are completely at home.

At this time, Sangster was at work on the garden at Ripponlea, Elsternwick, as well as two important properties on the mount, Ard Choille and Braemar. Taylor died in 1892, leaving Sangster to carry on until his death in 1910. Jane Sangster, a daughter, then carried on both the Toorak and Macedon nurseries until 1930.

Views in old postcards and photographs show gentian lining the drive for its full length as well as ornamental conifers placed in a garden setting. There were ornamental ponds and creekside walks and the site was open for public display. Once sold, the site declined, and the fires of 1983 contributed to its demise. A more recent owner of the nursery was the head gardener at the Fitzroy Gardens, who ran the site as a nursery with his wife. After he died around 1969 his widow ran the property as a cut flower business, supplying Kellow-Fawkner with flowers for their Rolls Royce showroom and leaving the hydrangeas and daffodils still growing there today. A Mr Porter, now of Clifton Hill, came to the site during World War II for holidays, the owners being relatives. He remembers the stone retaining wall near the present carparking area as the pride of the owners, filled with peonies and other flowers. There was also a large horse chestnut in this area. The drive was then paved with white pebbles.

Today, Taylor & Sangster's site covers approximately 13.5 acres, of which two acres have been planted with *Pinus radiata* and an equivalent amount remaining as bushland. The rest of the area has been planted with a wide variety of exotics and many are self-seeded or suckering plants. The property is set on the east side of a steep hill, with pathways, pittosporum hedges, holly walks, and a stream with stepping stones at the base of the property. It contains low stone wall remnants, and a stone pond near the entrance. Individual plant specimens of note include the Japanese umbrella pine near the stepping stones on the stream. Many trees and shrubs are listed on the National Trust of Australia's Significant Tree Register.

Summary

In summary, the legacy of the contribution of these horticultural enterprises can be seen in a visit to any of the fine gardens of the Macedon Ranges. The grounds of properties such as Ard Choille, Duneira, Durrol and Karori, reflect the variety of plants introduced by these early nurseries and the great efforts of the people who tended these gardens under difficult conditions. Many individual trees are listed on the National Trust's Register of Significant Trees and the gardens contain interesting examples of rare shrubs, such as the holly cultivars at Durrol. The contribution that is more difficult to assess is the extent of the horticultural diversity of these nurseries and the plants first introduced by them and distributed throughout the state, interstate and overseas. Further research in this area would undoubtedly be most rewarding and revealing. Finally, one of the most direct legacies of these nurseries and their impact on the Macedon gardens, has been that of encouraging tourism in the Ranges. With the development of a direct rail link, not only were the nurseries able to convey their wares throughout the state and elsewhere, but they were also able to provide a popular destination for tourists, who visited the many display gardens, staying in various guest houses and resorts in local towns and on the mount. The popularity for garden and nursery visiting remains a feature of the Ranges today for bodies such as our own, the Australian Garden History Society, and for others such as the Open Gardens Scheme and a number of charities for whom garden openings have been an important annual social event attracting great numbers from Melbourne and further afield over many years.

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Recollections of a Life in a Garden

by Karin McKinnon

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, it gives me great pleasure to speak at this Conference but I have been given the impossible task of giving a run down on five generations covering a period of 75 years in fifteen minutes!

When my mother, father and their new baby, my sister, were renting a house at Mount Macedon because of the wonderful air and to escape the flu epidemic which was raging, they used to sneak up this drive at Durrol because they were intrigued and unable to see the house from the footpath! This photo was taken soon after the house was built in 1903. Note the hoof prints and the marks of the carriage wheels. Even in those early days the garden was quite well established.

On a train trip to Melbourne, my father who was commuting, was saying that he wanted to buy a house on the mount and Mr Foster Woods said that he wanted to sell a property which turned out to be Durrol. In August 1919, it was sold to my father Mr Stanley Allen, 'walk in, walk out'. (There were no big removalist vans in those days so it was quite a common occurrence!)

One of the earliest recollections was the big move to a rented house in Melbourne for the winter months. The horse-drawn van backed up to the back verandah, and was loaded with all the household and personal effects including the fowls! The two ponies were ridden down but the cow was never taken! In those early days, it was quite a large household because there were my parents, three of us, a nurse and later a governess, a cook and a parlour maid and two large dogs.

The Christmas concerts which the governess produced were very memorable; the household, grandparents, Miss McGee and the married couple who lived in the cottage were invited and we three children sang, recited and put on a play. We did 'The King's breakfast' by A.A. Milne once, the King, the Queen and the dairymaid and the dog was the Alderney!

In those days, the house was lit by its own gas engine and this monster is not a piece of Ned Kelly's armour but the gas engine called 'The Light of Australia' which very ingeniously mixed benzolene and water to form gas with the help of weights which hung from a large tower. Some nights, the lights would get dimmer and dimmer – then there was a great panic to wind up the weights before being plunged into total darkness, since gas would escape once the weights were wound up. Electricity came to Mount Macedon in 1930, which meant we had power as well as light.

Another interesting event was the sealing of the Main Road. Mr Chris Cowper of 'Ard Rudah' organised the collection and then wanted the road called Cowper Avenue. This sounded awfully suburban, but for years the sign posts 'Cowper Avenue' were placed at Calder Highway and Honour Avenue although someone always removed them. Even now in the 1993 phone book a few people live in Cowper Avenue while the rest live in Main Road.

Between the two wars, Mount Macedon became very popular and the tennis tournament became one of its highlights. There were lots of friends with whom to play tennis and go ferreting; Margaret Darling was one of them (we used to buy the ferrets at the eastern market and sometimes they would escape in the car while being taken to Durrol for the holidays, much to the consternation of the driver. Other times we went on shooting picnics with Doug Hatrick who owned the garage and had a marvellous fire truck. Occasionally we were allowed to ride on the bonnet and the boys were allowed to shoot by the headlights from the bonnet. We spent much of our time riding with the many friends who also had ponies; we were allowed to ride anywhere but we had to be home in time for meals. Many times we took our lunch so that we could go further afield, like to Hanging Rock, Woodend, Riddells Creek and The Black Forest. On some very hot evenings we would leave late in the afternoon, rendez-vous at some picnic ground with some of the mothers for a chop picnic and then ride home by moonlight in the cool. This was a great highlight of the holidays.

So as not to disturb the cook, Mum used to make delicious sponge cakes, biscuits, red current jelly, raspberry jam and clotted cream in her kitchenette. Afternoon teas were very lavish for the tournaments, tennis parties of my mother's, bridge parties and cards. Of course we had to pick the raspberries and red currents and look after the animals. If it was too wet for tennis, and it often was, we would play cards, which we also did sometimes at night.

After Ian and I were married we spent many happy holidays with our children with Mum and Dad; we tried to give our children a similar happy carefree life but much of the freedom had gone and there were not so many young with whom to play and ride. My sister and her family lived on a property near Holbrook which they could not leave because of the risk of bush fires and my brother preferred Barwon Heads, so we were the lucky ones.

In 1929, Miss Edna Walling was commissioned to draw up a plan for the sloping northern site and also for below the tennis court which luckily was never constructed. She cleverly altered her original plan during construction. The placement of the sundial broke the long flight of steps which gives one the chance of a breather. For some years the Edna Walling garden has been rather neglected, because so much of our time has been spent replanting the southern border which was completely devastated by the 1983 bushfire. We have now turned our attention to rejuvenating some of the rhododendrons, and this has opened up the Edna Walling garden; it has lost much of its privacy and secrecy but it shows the wonderful design of her plan.

In 1987-88, we did reductions, which has made the kitchen bright and sunny and given us a small family room. We changed two maids' bedrooms into a laundry and bathroom, removed the old laundry, the maids' bathroom and the outside bathroom on the end of the verandah, the scullery and the egg room all of which were on the north side of the house. We also removed the gas engine shed and the last of Mr Foster Woods' cages where he had kept pheasants many, many years ago.

The Ash Wednesday fire was devastating and the house would have certainly been burnt if it had not been for David Marshall, who bravely took the water cart over the mount in the early hours of Thursday morning and put it on the burning shrubbery before the fire reached the



John Hawker

Durrol, Mount Macedon

house. Everything was tinder dry because for months there had been no rain – the water restrictions were limited to sixty litres per person, which was useless in a large garden. Perhaps some of you do not know that there was a bad fire on Mount Macedon a fortnight earlier which burnt a great tract of land to the north. This was dreadful for those who were burnt out, but saved hundreds of lives in the later fires and halted the Ash Wednesday fire. Of course, the fire has made the garden more interesting because we were getting less and less lawn. The fire cleared the lawn for us which we could never have done, but it was rather a drastic way of doing it.

It was so hard to know where to start with the replanting but, when I decided to introduce a riding track for the grandchildren, the garden started to take shape, and quite a lot of things regrew which was a great help.

The west end behind the birdbath was very badly burnt and the house could be seen from the road, which is hard to imagine now. Before the fire we could not see the south or west sky at all and, because of the loss of trees all over the mount, we get constant winds and much more sunlight. We were very fortunate that the SEC agreed to put their wires underground along part of the Main Road and so saved our huge trees, which were not burnt, from their chainsaws.

We were also fortunate that the fire never started in the Edna Walling garden, but the blackened gums show how close it was. The south side of the fernery was severely burnt and the treeferns in this part of the garden died and had to be replaced – yet down in the gullies everywhere on the mount, incredibly, the treeferns sprang into life with vivid apple green fronds in a sea of blackness about three weeks after the fires!

There are many problems in such an old garden as Durrol, as things grow bigger and bigger. The very rare weeping holly is encroaching over the drive and the limb of the huge oak nearby has been bolted seven times: there are constant decisions and work to be done to take the garden into the twenty-first century!

Before concluding, I would like to share with you the story of our grandmother who (aged in her sixties) wanted her own garden and, so as not to interfere with Mum's gardener, she made an English woodland garden down the gully. It was quite an achievement because of the steepness and she conscientiously brought back the tools each night. It was a lovely spot; she planted conifers, birches, daffodils, bluebells, forget-me-nots and foxgloves. When the lawn had to be mown Gran took down the clickety-clack steel-rimmed mower, but the returning of the mower over the rough steep terrain was too much and she had to get help; it eventually became very overgrown. Then eighteen months after the Ash Wednesday fire, the burnt out gully burst into bloom with a sea of foxgloves from the seeds Gran had planted over fifty years earlier. We rescued some and placed them round the garden.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of your Conference and the visits to the many gardens.

I wish to thank Barbara Strange for coming down from Mount Macedon to show some of her slides which illustrated some of the points of interest.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT CONFRONTS RURAL HERITAGE

Strategies for the Macedon Ranges in the twenty first Century

by TREVOR BUDGE

THE HISTORY of the Macedon Ranges has been a continuous process of urban development meeting rural heritage. How we treat the urban-rural fringe has become one of the major issues confronting planning, community development, conservation and heritage planning.

Our past strategies for dealing with issues such as these may not be sufficient to protect hopes for the future and also to cater for the economic expectations that an area such as the Macedon Ranges promotes.

This paper explores the need for individuals and the community to be actively involved in setting policy and strategies and particularly to play a role in local government. the paper also suggests that new approaches to planning may be needed. Four structures or techniques relevant to approaching these issues for the Macedon Ranges are discussed:

- structure plans for relevant areas
- urban 'fences'
- financial incentives
- purchase or transfer of 'development rights'.

Each of these structures requires much more sophisticated techniques than have been viable or attempted to date.

An area like the Macedon Ranges requires far more innovative and imaginative approaches than have been tried elsewhere if long-term sustainable results are to be achieved. These approaches require a partnership between the levels of local government, the community and individual property owners. They should focus on collaborative decision-making which goes beyond specific issues to a strategic approach for the whole region.

In particular, such an approach to an area like the Macedon Ranges promotes the idea that recognition of the outstanding heritage, including the landscapes and gardens, is a vital component of future planning and development.

Local councils have played a critical role in setting policy and practice to conserve and manage the natural environment. It is true that the Shire of Gisborne has displayed a remarkable enlightened approach in regard to the heritage of the Macedon Ranges, in fact the shire was the leading council in ensuring the undertaking and completion of the Macedon Ranges Cultural Heritage and Landscape Study.

The study in many respects was innovative with its emphasis on cultural heritage and landscape as an integrated and consistent theme to explain and interpret the Ranges. It also emphasised the treatment of three local government areas as a single region. The study was not approached as a series of discrete areas – the municipal boundaries did not come into the assessment and analysis of the area. The study encompassed a broad canvas of heritage with its many historical themes and the various roles the region has played in the life of the region, in relation to Melbourne and in a state and national setting.

The Macedon Ranges Cultural Heritage Study has amply demonstrated the diversity, complexity and depth in heritage places and buildings which are now such a feature of the whole area. In all, the study identifies 1,051 individual significant places, including 23 gardens. Thirty landscape units which comprise the Macedon Ranges area have been documented. The Study has provided detailed citations for 256 places which have been recommended for inclusion in the respective municipal planning schemes. A further 403 places have been recommended for future research and possible inclusion in the local planning schemes. Two heritage precincts have been documented and a further four listed for further research.

The heritage elements collectively in their style, their function and historical development clearly distinguish the Macedon Ranges as a particular form of cultural heritage not seen elsewhere in Australia. Perhaps the most significant thing and of relevance to the conference is that the area almost certainly contains the finest collection of private gardens in Australia.

However, I don't want to look back – let's look to the future. I want to argue that there are important actions which all interested persons must take if the heritage you treasure is to be retained and properly managed. You cannot avoid the political process, not a party political approach, but getting involved in the decisions and the decision making which really counts. As Victor Hugo wrote: 'There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come'.

While we might bemoan lost heritage, and we cannot overlook it, we have come a long way since the National Estate was coined, as 'the things we want to keep'. The Commonwealth, all states and many local governments have taken a wide range of actions to ensure the retention of significant heritage. Volunteer groups have never been stronger – but it is quite clear that without ongoing community and individual action there will be further loss of heritage.

I particularly refer to the fact that the greatest threat to area like the Macedon Ranges is their sheer attractiveness. So many people want to live in and near the area, use it for recreation and leisure and capitalise on its tourist value, that the area is now facing its greatest threat. It is in danger of being over-loved.

The issue of urban development confronting rural landscapes and heritage has been with us a long time – I think it started in 1788. There is little doubt it will be with us forever. What we do in any one place in resolving that issue sets the pattern for that area for the foreseeable future. Some of the changes we make are effectively forever. One of the most dramatic changes we make is to impose the straight line on the landscape, providing an order which is indelible.

New straight lines are being imposed on the Macedon Ranges all the time. There is continuing pressure for new residential development in the towns and villages and for rural, residential or hobby farm development in these areas. At current rates of population growth, the existing population level of about 25,000 persons would double over the next 25 years. The key questions are: where should those people be housed, in what areas, in what types and forms of urban settlement and in what styles of housing? There is now an emerging fear that the Macedon



Urbanisation on the march

Ranges or at least parts of it will become part of suburban Melbourne. If you stand on the top of Mount Macedon you can see the suburbs. If you stand there long enough you can almost feel that you see the suburbs advancing towards you. Should the suburbs extend in a continuous path to the foot of Mount Macedon? Can the region still be a rural landscape if it is a part of contiguous Melbourne?

If you question the apparent inevitability of urban growth then you have a process by which you will achieve this and ensure the protection of the heritage of the area. You must find out who is making the decisions, what are the relevant Acts and policies which are in operation and how you can influence the decision makers. Just as significantly you need to know what changes are occurring and what influence they will have.

The role of local government is critical in the process. In the Macedon Ranges, it is likely that, with local government restructuring in Victoria, the present three councils administering the area will be reduced to one. A far easier prospect to manage the heritage of the area you think. Well possibly, what is the new local government area embraces large areas of urban and fringe Melbourne and the Macedon region is not the focus of their activity. Even if there is only one council and it basically embraces only the Macedon Ranges, what are the policies of this new council for the heritage of the region? Good work requires a long period of development of a working relationship with various authorities, of building a trust with the community on sensitive management issues. All that has to be built again with new councillors and staff and new policies developed. The community of the Macedon Ranges and those with a deep interest in the area cannot afford to stand back from that process and simply let it happen – they must be part of that process.

As well as local government reform, we have seen here in Victoria and elsewhere, a strong move to an economic rationalist approach. A number of recent studies have shown that heritage can pay its way and that it is the backbone of the livability of many places and can contribute substantially to the economic base of many areas. However, in any approach which seeks to remove the barriers to any form of development, heritage is likely to be cast aside. There are still individual battles to be won. The greatest threat to the loss of heritage is not the big battles, which everyone focuses on, it is the cumulative impact of the little battles, which, if they are lost, add up to a major change which is barely discernable piece by piece.

One of the major recommendations of the study was to ensure the protection of buildings, sites, gardens and landscapes through protecting these places in the relevant local planning schemes. The requirement for permits for demolition and major alteration are an essential component of any heritage protection plan. The support of the relevant owners and the community for these controls is critical. it is not only local government but state government who approve such controls and they must be lobbied and encouraged to implement them.

However, as necessary as these controls are, they are essentially negative. It is critical that in areas like the Macedon Ranges that we start to pursue positive support for heritage. The Heritage Study recommended that local government support heritage protection and conservation by funding a heritage advisor and setting up a restoration fund. There is now tax deductibility for certain approved forms of heritage work. The Commonwealth needs to be lobbied to ensure that such measures are not only continued but also widened in their scope and monies available.

Overseas, it has become necessary to go beyond these incentives and look at other opportunities to protect what is critical. In many areas of the United States, the intrinsic value of areas has led to schemes such as the transfer of development rights or the purchase of development rights to ensure that a particular area is preserved the way it is. These innovative concepts cannot be dismissed as part of the possible long term strategies for the area. They need to be on the agenda. In other areas, urban growth boundaries have been established. These are like 'fences' which define the limit of urban development for a long period of time – up to twenty years.

The best overall solution lies in clearly establishing a proper strategic policy for the region, with structure or development plans for the key components. The first strategic policy decision is how many people should live in the area. Once that is decided the next question is where they should live and then what form of development should take place in those areas. One of the key tasks for the new Macedon Ranges Council is to set out a maximum population figure for the area and set in place policies not only to achieve that number but to reinforce it. To date, the Shire of Gisborne is the only one of the three Macedon councils to effectively do this. Over ten years ago they set a maximum population figure for the Shire and the key urban centres and have prepared detailed plans to implement those targets and spelt out the style and type of development they want. All that has been done on the basis of extensive community consultation and support.

Herein lies the message for the Macedon Ranges for the future: clear, well articulated policies based on sound long term strategies, based in turn on community input and ownership.

Nature's Renewal and the Rebirth of a Garden

by GREGORY MOORE

Abstract

In Australia the term bushfire conjures up images of destruction, damage and even death. Like the Ash Wednesday fires, the recent fires in Sydney were seen as both devastating and catastrophic to both the natural environment and human life and property.

However, bushfires are not destructive in the natural environment. They are simply a part of the normal ecology, to which native plants and animals have adapted. Certainly, there will be individual plants and animals that are damaged or which die during a fire, but the populations and communities continue. Indeed, in many cases the communities that are known and loved by so many Australians are often dependent on fire, and without fire their future survival is jeopardised.

In gardens where there is often a mixture of native and exotic plants, bushfires present some interesting problems. Some of the native plants are often well adapted to the fire and survive; others may be killed but regenerate readily from seed. Many of the exotics, however, lack adaptations to fire and have to be managed if the garden is to be re-established properly and quickly.

Identification of the type of damage that individual plants have suffered, the characteristics of the fire and the adaptations of the plants must all be considered in determining whether specimens will live or die and how the garden is to be managed. Making a correct diagnosis of the plants condition after fire can save a great deal of money, time and effort in restoring a garden.

Introduction

Following as it did, a prolonged period of drought, the summer of 1982/83 was particularly severe. Not only were temperatures high, but rainfall continued to be low. As a consequence, a number of natural and semi-natural communities were showing symptoms of serious drought, and the risks of fire were substantial. Throughout the summer there had been a number of serious fires, and it seemed likely that there would be fire damage to many plant communities.

Furthermore, as the summer progressed, the drought began to affect not only the natural communities but rural and then eventually urban communities. In Melbourne, as the gardens dried and then water restrictions were imposed, the effects on street trees, public gardens and domestic gardens became clear. The brown lawns that soon became evident were soon overshadowed by shrubs and then trees wilting, and in some instances subsequently dying. The drought was one of the most severe on record, and its effects on vegetation proved to be extensive and long lasting.

It is now a matter of record that the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983 were not only widespread but, sadly, destructive of property and human life. In the Macedon region, a taste of what was to come had already been experienced with the fires at Greendale and at Macedon itself earlier in the year. Although significant in their own right, these fires are often forgotten about, or are grouped with the Ash Wednesday fire when the impact of fires on the region are considered.

The fires that affected the natural, semi-natural and created garden sites at Mount Macedon and its surrounds are worthy of review. The different sites responded to the fires in quite different ways, and the management implications of these responses are far reaching. The lessons to be learnt are quite profound and can applied elsewhere, as the fires in the Sydney region of earlier this year demonstrated, and as the fires in New South Wales and Queensland this spring have also demonstrated.

The effects of fire in the eucalypt forests of Mount Macedon

There is a considerable body of literature describing the role of fire and its effects on forests and other plant communities dominated by eucalypts (Gill and Groves, 1981; Groves, 1981). It is essential that the importance of fire as a natural ecological factor in such communities is recognised by all who live amongst the vegetation and who are responsible for its management. Eucalypt dominated communities are inevitably fire prone and fire dependent. It is impossible to have such communities without the periodic occurrence of fires and, conversely, the presence of such vegetation makes the occurrence of fire inevitable.

In general, eucalypts have a number of spectacular adaptations to stress and to fire in particular (Table 1). In the Macedon region, and indeed on the mountain itself, a number of different eucalypt dominated communities can be identified. The first is a tall open forest community dominated by species such as mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*), and in some places associated with other species such as mountain grey gum (*E. cypellocarpa*) and messmate stringy bark (*E. obliqua*). In other places there were mixed eucalypt open forests with species such as *E. obliqua* and the peppermints, *E. radiata* and *E. dives* as dominants, and there were even a few remnant stands of snow gum (*E. pauciflora*).

These communities were all burnt during the fires of 1983, most on Ash Wednesday, but some in the earlier fires. The effects of the fires varied as did the communities' response. However, it is worth noting that in these natural communities, bushfires are not destructive, destroying or devastating but are rather the logical conclusion of one set of natural cycles, and the beginning of another. Without the fires these communities could not be what they are, they could not renew themselves and they could not continue. The fires clean up, recycle and renew the communities, and in every sense they rejuvenate the communities that have been burnt.

In the mountain ash dominated forests, the effects of fire were swift, sure and predictable (Groves, 1981). Individual mountain ash trees are very sensitive to fire and almost all were killed in this case. The trees killed can remain standing for many months and even many decades after the fire. It is usually assumed that regeneration in such communities' is from seed that is stored in the soil, and for some species such as many of the *Acacias* this is true. Indeed, a hot fire which damages the seed coat of the *Acacia* seed can be the trigger that allows germination. However, for the mountain ash and many other eucalypt species, there is virtually no seed in the soil or litter because the seed is

Table 1: Common Eucalypt adaptations to fire

Thick bark	Sclerophyllous leaves
Epicormic buds	Lignotubers
Woody fruits	Fibrous/stringy bark
Volatile oils in leaves	Seedling regeneration

harvested by insects, usually ants. Within four to six weeks of the fire, the fruits and foliage on the trees at the time of the fire are shed, providing both a nurturing mulch and a seed source for the regeneration that follows (Neville, 1986). In mature mountain ash forests there are few, if any, juvenile trees and the community can be described as even aged. Amongst the reasons for the lack of young trees, the competition from established trees and low levels of light are important factors limiting growth. Fire is the key to regeneration and continuity.

The fire affecting mountain ash trees, which lack many of the adaptations to fire of other eucalypt species, removes competition and allows high levels of light to reach the forest floor. Within weeks of the Ash Wednesday fires, the processes of renewal and regeneration were in evidence. Large 'toadstools' appeared which were the fruiting structures of the mycorrhizal fungi associated with the mountain ash roots. There was also significant litter, including seed scattered over the forest floor, and the ferns and tree ferns were already re-establishing their canopies and displaying a pristine new foliage.

In such a community it is best in many ways to leave the community to itself. Recovery will occur and is often complicated by human intervention. However, at a site like Mount Macedon it was not possible to leave dead and dying trees standing where they can present real hazards to life and property because of the high visitor traffic. Accordingly, some clean up operation was necessary, but as the effects are often long lasting and unpredictable, they should be kept to a minimum to allow for natural regeneration.

Similar events were taking place in the snow gum forests, where individual trees had been killed, but the processes of renewal, reseeding and regeneration were well underway. In the mixed forests of messmate and peppermint, regeneration not only involved the processes above, but many individual trees had survived the fire, and epicormic shoots and lignotuberous shoots were beginning to emerge as the communities commenced a new cycle of growth.

Much of the literature describing regeneration after fire, gives an impression of an even and generalised process of recovery. Such generalisations can be dangerously wrong, because they underestimate the impact of local topographic, environment and micro-climatic affects. In the Macedon region, recovery from the fire was much slower on northerly facing slopes (Lawton and Stockton, 1985). In some instances there was no seedling regeneration at all on such slopes, and the forest was re-established from lignotuberous and epicormic shoots. Clearly, aspect has a significant effect on recovery from fire, and must be considered in post-fire management (Parry-Burton and Foster, 1987).

Similarly, the effects of micro-climate on seedling germination and recovery after fire can be profound. Often the



Gregory Moore

Epicormic shoots show the rapid recovery of this eucalypt five months after a fire



Gregory Moore

Fire damaged conifers at Macedon, 25 March 1983

layer of black charcoal that is left behind after the fire, while it is nutrient rich, absorbs heat and so seedling germination and establishment may not occur for months after the fire. Accordingly, many species germinate in the 'nature's little greenhouses' that are provided by the fallen debris, logs and tree trunks that occur on the forest floor after fire (Neville, 1986; Parry-Burton and Foster, 1987). Removal of this debris, far from being good management, can reduce seedling germination and establishment, delay recovery and affect the composition of the community that re-establishes in the wake of the fire. Furthermore, the fallen logs, branches and tree trunks can also trap soil particles and other debris that is moved by heavy rainfall, and which can lead to erosion (Neville, 1986).

In these natural and semi-natural communities, fire cannot be seen as destructive or devastating, even though individuals die and valuable timber may be lost. These communities are fire dependent. Fire is part of their ecology and does neither harm nor good; it is simply part of nature's cycle. In such places natural fires should be allowed to take their course and, in managing such areas, the inevitability of fire must be recognised. If people are to live in such places their homes must be properly constructed and appropriate fire prevention plans and techniques implemented which will allow such fires to burn without threatening the property or lives of the people that live amongst them.

It is disappointing that in a place like Victoria, which is probably the most fire prone region on the planet, the lessons of our fire history have not been better learned. In such forests, fire is not the enemy to be fought but rather an ecological factor that requires thoughtful, visionary and professional management. Victorians should be leading the world in such management, rather than looking for inappropriate lessons from elsewhere or repeating the mistakes of the past.

Table 2: Criteria for assessing plant condition

Cracked and lifting bark
Bark separated from cambium and sapwood
Dead cambium (discoloured/dark brown)
Ringbarked major branches or trunk
Ringbarked trunk at soil or mulch surface
Dead or seriously damaged roots
Presence of dormant buds for recovery
Presence of epicormic or lignotuberous buds
Capacity for suckering

The effects of fire on the gardens of the Macedon region

The effects of fire on created landscapes are often dramatically different from those in natural and semi-natural communities. The Macedon region has long been renowned for its spectacular and historic gardens and many of these also bore the brunt of fire in 1983. The burning of such historic garden sites raises many issues about post-fire management that had not been considered before. Much harm was done because people adopted immediate post-fire management practices that were applicable to forests rather than to major, substantial and historic gardens that housed valuable collections of exotic and native species.

In considering the effects of fire on gardens, it is essential to recognise what fire does to plant material. Some plants are burnt, some merely singed and others affected by the blasts of hot air that accompany the strong wind associated with bushfire. The effects on plants of burning, singeing and scorching are quite different, and must be managed in different ways after the fire. Furthermore, as always in dealing with biological systems, there is a strong variability amongst different genera and species. In short, you have to consider the characteristics of the plant to determine what its response to fire will be and how it should be managed.

It was interesting to be in Mount Macedon a few days after the fire and see the bulldozers piling ferns and tree ferns into great heaps on the assumption that they were fire sensitive and had been killed. In fact, the opposite is the case, and the growth habit of the tree ferns (*Cyathea australis*) and many of the ground ferns (*Polystichum sp., Blechnum sp.*) is such that they are unlikely to burn and as a consequence are very fire resistant. The fibrous leaf bases, not only hold a great deal of moisture, but are slow to burn, and these characteristics provide ample protection for the growing apices within. The ferns in fact had suffered little damage in the fire. They had been defoliated, but would soon produce new fronds and show full recovery.

It is interesting to note that lessons had not been learnt from previous fires, such as the famous 1939 fires. In

photos of the Warburton region taken immediately after the 1939 fires, which were of an intensity greater even than those of 1983, huge mountain ash trees had been reduced to a thin line of white ash on a velvet black background. However, the tree ferns though blackened and frondless where still standing and most recovered to be the mature, over-centurions that can be seen today in the regrowth forest. The ferns should never had been bulldozed in 1983, because the lessons of earlier fires were clear. The ferns are important because they contribute so much to the ambience and the texture of the landscapes, both natural and created in the Macedon region.

Mount Macedon has been renowned for the fine collection of conifers that its many gardens contained. It is usually assumed that conifers are very fire sensitive and as a consequence many trees were felled in the days immediately after the fires. However, not all conifers are killed by fires, and indeed some are renowned for their longevity and fire resistance. The thick bark of the redwoods renders them fire resistant, and usually they recover from fire quickly and well. Other species such as some of the deciduous conifers also cope well with fire. Often these trees are removed after fire unnecessarily and their removal can cause major impacts on the gardens they once dominated (May and Moore, 1983).

Given the significance of the conifers in the Macedon region, much greater care should have been given to those which were felled and those which were left standing immediately after the fire. A century old redwood is a very valuable specimen. As redwoods go, it is still in its infancy, but it can contribute much to the landscape after the fire because of its height, form and foliage texture. The thoughtless removal of conifers that have survived the fire literally squanders a century or more of time, effort, care and opportunity.

For other exotic plants, whether they are killed or survive the fire depends upon the nature of their injury and the habit and adaptations of the species. Many of the rhododendrons that were burnt in the fire were killed, but those that were scorched by hot wind blasts, although looking rather sorry, had suffered little more than defoliation and soon produced new leaves and shoots. In such a case, it is necessary to identify the type of injury and the fact that the cambial layers have not been damaged in determining how the species should be managed. By leaving scorched rhododendrons in place an important element of many historic gardens were soon restored. Once again, in the enthusiasm to clean up after the fire, viable rhododendrons were removed and this represents poor, rather than good management.

For many exotic plants, although the stems and foliage were killed in the fires, the root systems remained alive and active. In some cases, regeneration from the rootstocks is not only useful, but provides a rapid means of re-establishing valuable vegetation. However, caution must be exercised because for grafted exotics the rootstocks may not only be the wrong variety, but in some cases are different species that are not wanted in the garden context (May and Moore, 1983). This scenario is amply demonstrated in the recovery of rhododendrons and roses amongst other species. The opportunity for budding and grafting of preferred, or even new varieties on to these rootstocks was often not even contemplated let alone tried in most gardens. It should be remembered that budding and grafting onto established rootstocks can provide an attractive and substantial specimen in a very short time.

Bulbous and cormous plants are often unaffected by fire, which has no real effect on their subsequent growth, apart from providing a boost in soil nutrient levels. Indeed, following the fires the displays of such plants in the following May through September was often quite spectacular, especially in the absence of so many other garden species. In talking about such plants it should be remembered that while there are many exotics of this type such as daffodils, freesias tulips and irises, there are also native species such as our orchids and the insectivorous droseras. For certain of the rhizomatous species, the effects are very similar and once again the fire has little impact upon their subsequent growth.

It is also worth noting that the adaptations described earlier for eucalypts (Table 1) are also possessed by many other species, both native and exotic. For example, the lillypilly can possess a lignotuber, some species in elms possess epicormic buds, many species of shrubs and trees have thick bark, sclerophyllous leaves are possessed by many native and exotic species and, of course, many species possess woody, fire resistant fruits. In evaluating the chances of survival of these species, it is worth considering their adaptations and the likelihood of their survival.

The role of the horticulturist in post-fire management

Immediately after a fire, it is important that professional horticultural advice is available to those responsible for managing the gardens that have been affected. It may seem to many that at such a time, when property and personal possessions have been lost, gardens would have a low priority. However, the experience at Macedon was quite the contrary. Many people had lost everything in the fire, but they had come to the Macedon region because of the environment and because of the gardens, and in many cases, the gardens were all they had left. In such cases, the gardens were a top priority and were symbolic of a commitment to the future, of regeneration and of a determination to rebuild.

Rarely in such circumstances is professional horticultural advice a part of the post-fire management strategy. Given the horticultural significance of the Macedon region, such a situation cannot be allowed to occur again. As part of the fire management plans for places such as Mount Macedon, the Dandenongs, or even the Blue Mountains region of Sydney, where there are large historic and significant gardens, there must be the availability of proper post-fire advice.

After a fire, it is essential that the horticulturist identify those plants that have survived and those which have succumbed to the fire (May and Moore, 1983). These decisions are sometimes difficult to make, but a number of simple criteria (Table 2) can be used to assess plant condition. It is important to determine whether the cambium has been damaged by the fire. This can be done on young tissue simply by peeling back the young bark and looking for the bright green cambium layer in some species or a nice light to pale brown cambial layer in others. Dark brown layers normally indicate that the plant is dead or dying. In older parts of the plant, especially for thick barked species, it

might be necessary to tap the bark to see if it has lifted from the cambium or to remove a small section of the bark to allow cambial inspection. If the cambium is dead, that part of the plant or the whole plant should to be removed.

Another symptom that is worth looking for is the lifting of the bark from the cambium or the development of substantial cracks in the bark. Care has to be taken with species like the gum barked eucalypts that shed their bark in strips seasonally. However, when the bark lifts, it is often a sign that the cambium has been killed, and that the branches or trunks so affected have no prospect of recovery.

It is also necessary to establish whether the root system of trees and shrubs remain viable after the fire. Often trees and shrubs growing in well mulched garden beds were ringbarked by the intensity of the fire around the base of the trunk as the mulch burnt. In some cases, whilst the trunks and foliage appeared to be little damaged, the plant had been ringbarked and in many instances was doomed. In other cases, the fire or the burning mulch killed the lateral and feeding roots that are near the soil surface. In such cases recovery is often unlikely.

In assessing the affects of fire on any vegetation or plant community, it is essential to remember that there are two important constituents of the stress imposed by the fire. The first is the intensity of the fire, usually measured by its temperature, and secondly the duration over which the plants experience the effects of the fire (Moore, 1975). Frequently, plants can survive very high temperatures if the durations are very brief, but can be killed by less intense fires that burn for longer durations.

It is also important to realise that the fire can change the environment in which the plants grow. Removal of foliage and overstorey cover exposes plants in the understorey and at ground level to much higher levels of radiation, to stronger winds and to wider fluctuations in temperature. Sometimes, plants that have survived the fire succumb to a second dose of stress in the weeks and months that follow. In the Macedon region, after the 1983 fires, many plants suffered significant damage from the severe frosts and snow falls that occurred in the following winter (Lawton and Stockton, 1985). Previously, many of these plants would have been protected by the other plants growing around them.

The role of the horticulturist is significant. Not only can the fabric of a garden be saved after fire, which can substantially reduce the time for re-establishment, but economic factors can be addressed as well. Immediately after the fire, clearing up of dead or dying plant material is carried out by the emergency authorities without cost to the land owner. A quick diagnosis of whether plants are likely to survive or not means that a swift and economical clean up can be made. However, by delaying for some months after the fire, the clean up and removal costs are usually borne by the land owner and in some cases can amount to many thousands of dollars. After one fire, the estimated removal costs for a number of dead conifers exceeded $50,000. As you can see, the financial stakes can indeed be high.

Conclusion

It can be seen that the effects of fire on natural and semi-natural plant communities in the Macedon region are neither destructive nor devastating. Fire is part of the natural ecological cycle of these communities, and without the fire the communities can neither regenerate nor persist through time. In such communities, fire is inevitable, usually on a periodic cycle and, as a consequence, fire must be properly managed in these regions.

Even in the exotic, grand and historic gardens of Mount Macedon, fire is not necessarily the totally destructive and devastating force that many believe. Properly managed, gardens can be re-established and regenerated speedily and effectively. Certainly, some specimens die and others are so severely damaged that their aesthetic value no longer merits their retention, but other specimens are barely affected and rapidly recover. Furthermore, the fire may be the stimulus for the revitalisation of an aged or senescing garden, and so provide an opportunity for new and innovative garden design and plantings. Great gardens are not static museum pieces but rather dynamic and evolving communities of plants. Fires are really just part of the change process, provided that they are anticipated, planned for and properly managed after the event.

The role of the horticulturist must not be ignored in the consideration of fire and its effects on regions like those in the Macedon district. A professional horticultural input into the pre- and post fire management of large, significant and historic gardens is essential if these gardens are to cope with fire, to recover quickly and continue to be part of the heritage of the nation. Too often in the past, fire has come unexpectedly and been poorly managed. The price of such poor management is high in such significant assets.

Acknowledgments

The author acknowledges the support of Dr P. May in reading the draft of the manuscript and for his suggestions, and the assistance of Mrs L. Woodbridge and Ms M. Dall for their patience and assistance in preparing the text. Due acknowledgement is also given to final year students in the Bachelor of Applied Science program at the Burnley Campus – J. Lawton, G. Stockton, M. Neville, E. Foster, D. Parry-Burton and C. Parnell – who conducted research under supervision in the Macedon region, and who have contributed to the thoughts presented in this paper.

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Conserving the Natural Resource

by **Max Gilbert**

THE DESTRUCTION of roadside vegetation in the provision of services can be devastating. By the time the State Road Construction Authority's Design Guidelines are complied with in respect to pavement width, shoulders and roadside drains, the farmers have cut down the trees along their fence line to prevent limbs falling on their fences, the State Electricity Commission (SEC) has cut the trees to to protect the power lines according to code, Telecom has removed vegetation to trench in communication cables, and the Fire Authority requests a bare earth policy from fence line to fence line for fire prevention, a roadside is likely to be barren.

However, it is possible to co-ordinate and accommodate the wide range of demands on a road reserve and still preserve the natural beauty and often unique species of vegetation along the roadside.

Gisborne Shire is fifty kilometres north west of Melbourne encompassing part of the Macedon Ranges. It includes the townships of Mount Macedon, Macedon, New Gisborne and Gisborne. The area has a constant growth rate of six percent, with seventy-five percent of the working population commuting outside the shire. The Macedon Ranges form an important part of the natural beauty of the area with most road reserves being heavily timbered.

In 1983 the Ash Wednesday bush fires devastated two-thirds of the area of the shire and destroyed over 500 houses, commercial, and public buildings. In the aftermath there was concern within the community over such matters as effective roadside fire hazard control, the re-establishment of roadside vegetation and the need to ensure that the area's natural beauty was restored.

The establishment of roadside conservation values in 1984 was the first step in preparing an overall roadside management plan. In the Gisborne shire, the results of the assessments have since been used in implementing roadside conservation strategies in three main areas:

- Fire prevention works and roadside vegetation regeneration control,
- State Electricity Commission assets, and
- Road construction.

Fire prevention works and roadside vegetation regeneration control

'Fire Prevention Plans' (FPP) developed for the shire categorised roads into strategic and tactical fire breaks, with recommendations for degrees of roadside clearing to achieve the desired 'fire safe' environment.

The Fire Prevention Plan was overlaid with a Conservation Assessment Plan (CAP). Where conflict occurred between listed fire prevention works and conservation values – for example, if extensive roadside clearing was recommended on a roadside with a high conservation value – on-site meetings were held to determine appropriate treatment to satisfy both requirements. The following solutions illustrate some of the treatments developed by the shire in order to meet safety requirements and maintain the integrity of valuable roadscapes.

Mount Macedon Road is a main road connecting the Calder Highway to the townships of Macedon and Mount Macedon. The road has been assigned a 'high conservation value' rating and is also classified as a strategic fire break. Much of the roadside vegetation was burnt in the 1983 fires, requiring a large number of advanced trees to be removed. The fire also initiated vigorous regenerative regrowth. During the conservation assessment survey, localised areas of rare native orchids were also identified. The potential conflict of extensive roadside clearing to achieve the required strategic fire break, and the need to retain the natural roadside beauty, especially as the road is the 'gateway' to Mount Macedon, was resolved by preserving 'blocks' of undisturbed revegetation and native orchids.

The 'block' areas were physically roped off by shire staff in consultation with members of the local fire brigade and Macedon Ranges Conservation Society. The remaining areas were then slashed in accordance with the standard Fire Prevention Plan. The result has been the retention of an attractive roadside landscape, the preservation of the orchids and satisfactory fire prevention works to prevent a fire from spreading along the roadway.

A second method of achieving a suitable fire break and retaining important visual features of the roadscape was to combine the development of fire breaks with that of SEC power line clearance along the road reserve. An appropriate area was cleared of all trees and slashed, however substantial stands of advanced trees were able to be retained between the cleared area and the road itself.

Many roads within the shire have large well-established trees with dense undergrowth on the roadsides. The conservation assessment of these roads is considered high because of the large trees. To maintain the visual attractiveness of the large trees and to meet fire prevention standards, the undergrowth was removed by slashing using a telescopic mower (and in some areas by hand slashing).

State Electricity Commission assets

A tree clearing coordination Committee was established for the Shire of Gisborne in 1976. The committee, with representatives from the SEC, the shire, the Department of Conservation and Environment, the Macedon Ranges Conservation Society and other interested parties, was established to control and co-ordinate the tree trimming practices of the SEC. Committee members would assess all powerlines prior to the SEC tree crews commencing works. Members would walk along the route of the SEC conductors and physically mark all trees to indicate whether they should be totally removed, lightly trimmed or pruned. Such diligence ensured a desired standard which meant the trees were not mutilated, but were trimmed aesthetically and to the requirements of the SEC code.

With this background of co-operation between the SEC and the shire, other works have been initiated to preserve the landscape value of road sides. These have included: undergrounding SEC assets; relocation of power lines; combined SEC/Fire Prevention clearing, and aerial bundled cable.

After the 1983 Bush Fires, there were few roadsides remaining on Mount Macedon which retained their former

canopy of trees. Only two such areas were untouched by the fire. Both these sections of road contained power lines which, if cut to code, would require the removal of the only remaining green trees on the mountain, also destroying the canopy effect over the roadway. The two area were along the Mount Macedon Road and Brougham Road.

Funding for undergrounding 1.3 kilometres of high and low voltage powerlines was jointly provided by the council and the SEC. The end result of much labour and finance was the retention of a magnificent avenue of trees which, if not protected by undergrounding, would have been necessarily removed, leaving a barren landscape behind.

Devonshire Lane on Mount Macedon was renowned for its magnificent avenue of mountain ash prior to the 1983 fires. The trees were burnt in the fire and required removal. SEC overhead lines ran the full length of the south side of the road. The local residents and council were keen to re-establish the landscape, however, the SEC's code did not allow for the re-establishment of the mountain ash. With the coordination of the shire council, residents raised $16,000 in local contributions and attracted a two-to-one grant from the SEC's cable undergrounding funds. The powerlines have now been installed underground and the naturally regenerated mountain ash are being allowed to grow naturally, to re-develop the picturesque Devonshire Lane.

In many instances the SEC, through the recommendations of the tree clearing coordination Committee, have relocated powerlines altogether to preserve either a particular species of tree or stand of trees. This has been achieved through three different practices:

(i) zigzagging powerlines from one side of the road reserve to the other and back again,
(ii) using a one side offset crossheads on the power poles instead of the standard 'T' construction allowing poles to be located closer to tree than normal, and
(iii) staggering the standard offset of the powerlines but still retaining these on the same side of the road reserve.

'Aerial Bundled Cable', comprised of heavily insulated conductors twisted together to form a single cable, has recently been introduced into Victoria by the SEC. The ABC reduces the amount of tree clearing to meet code distances because the ABC is a single strand instead of the normal three strands spread on a cross arm. Because it is heavily insulated, ABC allows branch overhang and reduced clearance distances from the conductor itself.

Low voltage ABC is now in use throughout the shire and its introduction has saved the need for heavy pruning of trees where it has been installed. An example is Alton Road, Mount Macedon, where the road reserve had a canopy of oak trees meeting across the pavement. Use of standard conductors would have destroyed the canopy, however, the use of ABC required only a 'hole' around the cable to be cut, thereby preserving the effect of the trees.

Road construction

The Gisborne shire has for a number of years recognised the importance of preserving the roadside landscape. With increasing urbanisation, and the area being a very popular

Honour Avenue, Macedon, a decade after 1983 bushfires



Francine Gilfedder



Francine Gilfedder

'The roadside landscape', Mt William Rd

tourist attraction for people from metropolitan Melbourne, growth in vehicular traffic volumes has been rapid. This has applied pressure on council to upgrade many roads, some from gravel to sealed surface, or widening existing narrow sealed roads.

In order to achieve the protection of the roadside vegetation, cater for the increased traffic volumes and provide road conditions of a standard expected by motorists, the Shire adopted modified design standards and construction techniques, which were sympathetic to the environs while providing improved road surfaces. One example is the popular tourist route which passes through the Barringo area in the foothills of Mount Macedon. It consisted of a network of gravel roads which carried high traffic volumes including tourist and commuter traffic. These roads were sealed using the modified design and construction techniques safe for motorists, but aesthetically winding amongst the trees and following the natural contours of the land. Of interest is the high acceptance by the motorists of the lower standards of road geometry with traffic travelling at appropriate speeds.

Conclusion

The Roadside Evaluation Assessment is the first step in formulating policies regarding the management of the roadside. It is a necessary tool in discussions with other bodies who are involved in the use of the roadsides, as it gives an important basis on which to encourage other parties to cooperate in the preservation of the roadside vegetation.

With cooperation between various authorities and local bodies, it is possible to achieve the desired result of preservation of the roadside landscape. It is a time-consuming process with many meetings, but the end result is rewarding and has been well worthwhile for the Shire of Gisborne.

Necessity or Aesthetic Nicety?

Regionalism and place making in today's landscape

by Michael Hough

Ladies and gentlemen; I'm delighted for this opportunity to participate in your Conference. As a theme, Mount Macedon is apt and has a significance that goes beyond local boundaries. It is a familiar one in almost every place I have come to know. Why is so much of our living environment loosing its diversity and identity? Most of the butterflies and wildflowers I collected as a schoolboy are now on Britain's endangered species list, and originally distinctive places have become indistinguishable one from another. Ask people where a place is – is it Toronto, Chicago, Milan? Most people wouldn't have a clue. There is little that tells us that it's Istanbul. If the differences between one place and another are the result of harmonious interactions between the ecological, cultural, and economic forces that sustain life, then there is no question in my mind that place and identity are essential and fundamental to our well-being and to life in general, and must be seen as a central issue of our time.

Definitions of place

In nature, regional differences are inherent. They are the product of natural history, evolving from processes that are infinitely complex and that produce infinitely varied adaptions of plants, life forms and physical landscapes. For instance, river landscapes in the western plains of Canada are different from those of the Precambrian shield. the wildflowers one finds along roadsides in Tuscany are different from those of Ontario. Such differences are also true of vernacular forms where the natural processes of the land are overlain by human influences. The vernacular can be described as built form that grows out of the practical needs of the inhabitants of a place, and the constraints of site and climate. In the farming landscapes of the Yorkshire Dales in England, the dry stone walls that were built over centuries to define property and fence in sheep reveal the complexity of the surface geology and character of the land over very short distances.[1] They reinforce the differences imposed by nature and came about not from choice, but from limitations of know-how, directly available building materials, and age-old traditions in wall building.

In a social context, regional identity in the past was determined by the cultural and institutional linkages that tied people to one place and dictated how they should lead their lives. Limitations of travel and a lack of choice to live anywhere except where you grew up made it so. Thomas Hardy has written about this in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. He describes how Tess looked over the countryside to the next town from her bedroom window, and wondered what magical experiences existed there. She knew every detail in her own village, but knew nothing about the town only a few miles away.

Another facet of place is that of naming. The cliff off which one jumps in the despair of unrequited love isn't a place until it becomes 'Lovers Leap'.[2] I remember on my first day in Edinburgh as an architectural student, I wanted to know what some of the city's great landmarks were. So I stopped an elderly Scotsman. 'Excuse me sir', I said politely, 'can you tell me what that castle is up there?' The old fellow looked at me for a full ten seconds with an expression that can only be described as a mixture of pity and disgust. 'It's no *that* castle' he replied eventually, 'it's *the* castle'. I left feeling pretty stupid, but seeing the castle and Edinburgh in a new light.

Some historical notes

To better understand the nature of place it is useful to review it from a historical perspective. I'd like to begin by examining two regional scenarios, almost a century apart, that illustrate how radically human development has affected both our perceptions and the realities of the modern landscape.

The first was in Edinburgh, Scotland in the 1880s when Patrick Geddes, the visionary Scottish biologist, sociologist and regional planner, built his Camera Obscura in a disused observatory. The Camera Obscura was a projection devise mounted at the top of the observatory tower that overlooked the city. Its purpose was to project a panoramic image of Edinburgh, and the rural region surrounding it, onto a large flat white table below. In spite of industrialisation, many cities still retained a sense of being urban entities set in a rural and undisturbed landscape, each with clearly defined ecological, economic and productive boundaries and identities. Geddes' purpose was essentially educational. He wanted to show people that to understand the city one had to understand its link to the rural countryside; that Edinburgh's identity was tied to the interdependence between the protection of nature, societal needs, and a viable economy: what he called 'Place', 'Folk' and 'Work'.[3]

The second scenario is set in our time when the distinguished American landscape architect, Phil Lewis, began analysing patterns of urbanisation across the United States from satellite photos taken at night. Based on the observations he made at the Centre of Environmental Awareness,[4] he showed that urban systems in North America are linking up to form rings of urbanisation around a variety of significant natural features. The emerging pattern that he found is a somewhat circular network of cities across the US that, as he has said, 'has altered our view of how urban areas should be perceived and managed'.[5]

Examined at a smaller scale, where towns and cities in Patrick Geddes' day were at the centre surrounded by a larger landscape, today it is what remains of that landscape that is forming the centre. A once ecologically complex and resilient rural environment has become fragmented *within* the city. Even though the city centre still retains a level of identity through its past connections with site and history, in the expanding urban edge there is little to reflect where development stops or where the rural landscape begins. Phil Lewis foresaw this decades ago when he began mapping the diverse natural and cultural features of the mid-western states of Illinois and Wisconsin. His purpose was to alert people to these patterns of priceless heritage and protect them from future development. The environmental corridors that he identified from this work have today become the basis for regional ecological design, and the necessary structuring elements for shaping urban growth.

There are remarkable similarities in the motives and underlying philosophies that dominated the thinking of Patrick Geddes in the 1880s, and Phil Lewis almost a century

later. Both were concerned with integrating nature into the growing cities. Both recognised the need for education and public support as a necessary basis for policy and legislation to protect natural and cultural landscapes. And both understood the need to maintain the identity of city regions.

Environmentalism and the restoration of regional identity

If we look at these issues from another perspective, we find that environmentalism has its roots in the Romantic movement and the creation of the urban parks and gardens of nineteenth century America. Romanticism grew out of the growing isolation of urban people from the natural world that resulted from industrialisation.[6] It was concerned with the study of an organic world that was harmonious and holistic – a view that we know today as an ecological perspective. It was in this context that the first parks were born. Drawn from the eighteenth century English style of landscape gardening,[7] they were places for contemplating nature and natural forms that would heal the spirit. The nineteenth century parks, therefore, were conceived as places that excluded the grim city. A Victorian moral ethic also prevailed that the opportunity to view nature would improve the moral standards of the workers.[8] The landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted emulated the pastoral and spatial qualities of these parks in Central Park, New York, which he designed with the unique qualities of the site in mind. He used locally native plant communities in his spatial compositions of woodland, meadow, and water and incorporated the native rock of the site to dramatise the underlying geological character of the city region. Olmsted was also the first planner to link parks together, where one could experience streams and forests as a continuous system of natural environments and trails. Boston's Emerald Necklace is an example of such a system. These early parks were possibly the first attempt to bring cities and nature together and establish a distinct sense of place within them.

In the American mid-west many peoples reacted to the destruction of the native tall grass prairie landscape that came about from industrial agriculture, urbanisation, and inappropriate horticultural practices. Jens Jensen, the well known American designer, spent most of his life educating peoples on the beauty and sense of identity that made this landscape special, and he built many parks and gardens in his efforts to restore the native prairie to the region.

In Canada, a community of artists known as the 'Group of Seven' painted the Precambrian scenery of Georgian Bay and the Canadian wilderness, and they taught people to see and appreciate a regional landscape of extraordinary power and untamed beauty. In fact, critics could not believe that such scenery existed, some even saying that their paintings should be banned since it would discourage immigration to Canada.[9] Since that time, the universal access provided by the automobile has allowed cottaging to spread throughout these regions. Development, power boats, water pollution, and the 'gardenisation' of natural lakeshores, have led to the decline of wildlife and natural diversity in many places. This is a universal problem and has to do with two things: firstly, *supply and demand* (the limited availability of the resource and the insatiable demand for it); secondly, *sustainability* (these beautiful and highly attractive landscapes are inherently limited in their capacity to sustain human activities).

Homogenisation and the fragmentation of nature

Today, we all recognise the shift away from what is distinctive to what is similar in the places we live in. Endless subdivisions and international skylines, the industrialisation of the countryside and the destruction of its diverse plant communities and wetlands, seem to be the result of choice rather than constraint in society's ability to control and reshape the environment. It has also emphasised the psychological separation between city and countryside; the perception that Nature does not exist in cities except as horticultural artifacts and individual phenomena disconnected from their context and origins.

The English novelist John Fowles, the author of *The French Lieutenant's Woman, The Magus,* and many other books, summarises the problem in his article 'The Tree'.[10] On a visit to Linnaeus' garden in Uppsala, Sweden, he had this to say about it's owner, whom he called 'the great indexer of nature' and who, between 1730 and 1760, classified much of earth's animate beings. 'Perhaps nothing is more moving at Uppsala than the actual smallness and ordered simplicity of that garden and the immense consequences that sprung from it in terms of the way we see and think about the world ... for all its air of gentle peace, it is closer to a nuclear explosion, whose radiations and mutations inside the human brain were incalculable and continue to be so'. Fowles suggests that humankind has evolved into an isolated creature, that sees the world anthropocentrically. The 'power of detaching an object from its surroundings and making us concentrate on *it* is an implicit criterion in all our judgements. A great deal of science is devoted to ... providing labels, explaining specific mechanisms and ecologies – in short, to sorting and tidying what would seem in the mass indistinguishable from one another'.[11] I would suggest some other perceptions and values continue to influence our views of nature and place.

Ideals and visions

The predilection to see the animate world as individual phenomena rather than as communities has resulted in the transfer of plants and animals from places where they naturally belong, to places where they don't. There are utopian ideals and predetermined visions at work here about what places ought to be, rather than what they actually are. The consequences, as you undoubtedly are well aware, have resulted in massive imbalances to indigenous natural systems worldwide and in total lack of sustainability in many others. An examination of the role of water in the urbanisation of natural communities provides an example. The age-old concept of the oasis has evolved from the notion of the ultimate utopian ideal – the garden. At a small scale the garden has symbolised the cultural idea of a fertile and beautiful place in an arid and hostile land. As such, it has added to the environmental and cultural diversity of many places. The urge to expand this ideal to include entire regions, however, has been achieved at enormous cost in the withdrawal of groundwater, the transfer of water supplies from distant river systems, and

the consequent deterioration of regional character. In California, nearly 90 percent of the population lives in the southern, arid and sun-soaked two thirds of the state.[12] Yet 75 percent of all natural water flow occurs in the northern third. A statewide system of aqueducts carries water from where it is plentiful to where it is scarce, and has permitted agriculture to use 85 percent of the State's annual water consumption, the remainder going to urban and commercial uses.[13] Much of this supports green lawns and a vast array of plants that have been imported from regions of high rainfall. This artificial landscape symbolises the imbalance between the vision of a garden oasis, and the ability of the environment to sustain the ideal. The loss of regional identity, therefore, is the consequence of transferring natural environments from their places of origin, to places where they don't belong and cannot be naturally sustained. It's the Florida in Arizona syndrome, or the ideal of a Garden in Eden at the expense of nature and a prescription for environmental catastrophe.

The imposition of social values

Social factors have always affected issues of identity. The pressure to conform to predetermined standards of behaviour, through by-law or community expectations, is a characteristic of much new development, and works against the practical needs of privacy, personal life, or convenience. A colleague of mine from the University of Manitoba aptly described the problem to me some years ago, after he moved into a new residential area in Winnipeg. He was determined to create an outdoor environment that suited his own needs and tastes rather than those of his neighbours. So he decided to return his front yard to a landscape of native prairie woodland rather than to the required turf of the street. Over five years his little prairie landscape established itself, and for him it was a poignant reminder, in miniature, of the native landscape that had been there before. However, his neighbour was not so pleased with this eyesore. In his view it stuck out like a sore thumb from the rest of the street. My friend wrote me:

> during that first summer he paid me a visit and asked when I intended to cut my lawn. Not really knowing the gentleman and not taking his statement seriously, I retorted that lawn cutting was a waste of energy and I was planning on getting a goat. My neighbour's jaw dropped, and once he had regained his composure he stormed off muttering something under his breath. A few minutes later I saw from my kitchen window a lawnmower sitting in the middle of the front yard. Thus was his subtle response.

Alternative approaches

Creating a sense of place involves new ways of thinking about the environment, and how decisions are made. Contemporary environmentalism in North America is identified in three important ways: firstly, it is a citizen-driven movement; secondly, its philosophical thrust is based on an integrated view of nature that includes human society; and thirdly, it is based on restoring environmental health to local and regional places. Across Europe and North America citizen groups are initiating projects to restore landscapes destroyed through urbanisation and are associating themselves with government as partners in decisions that affect them directly. I'd like to suggest some of the principles that seem appropriate to this broader view together with a few examples from my own experience.

Knowing the place

Regional identity has to do with two fundamental criteria: firstly, with the natural processes of the region or locality – what *nature* has put there; secondly, with social processes – what *people* have put there. Olmsted, in designing Central Park, knew this. He revealed the essential structure of the land on which New York City is built by leaving the granite rock exposed wherever it occurs on the site. It clearly expresses the relationship between bedrock and New York's skyline, and reinforces the underlying character of this now urbanised landscape.

In the Canadian prairies, major efforts to restore the native landscape are ongoing. I recently began the restoration of a river valley in the City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The protection and management of the valley lands are controlled by a public agency, the Meewasin Valley Authority. As part of its mandate, the Authority undertook a redevelopment of the Saskatoon Art Gallery lands that form part of the river valley. The property and river bank had been badly degraded over many years by landfill, parking lots, and mown turf. In its larger context, the essential identity of Saskatoon is shaped by its river that flows through the city as a green prairie corridor, rather than as an urban one typical of European cities. My natural response was to restore the site to better reflect its unique prairie qualities. The gallery could then be appropriately thought of as a pavilion set in a native landscape, rather than an urbanised extension of the city. A wide variety of locally native plants were planted, and a trail system and observation point were woven into the design. The most difficult task of the entire process was persuading a highly conservative City Parks department, steeped in the conventions of horticulture, to forgo its usual turf and lollipop tree maintenance regime typical of every park in the Canadian west, and manage the site as an evolving native community. Miraculously, we succeeded. But it remains the first, and the last, example of naturalised landscape in the city.

Necessity and sustainability

What we learn from the vernacular is that necessity creates the need to be self-sustaining, and the combination of the two has everything to do with regional identity. Some modern cities have, for very practical reasons, been forced to become sustainable. A good example is Tucson, Arizona, a city that is entirely dependent on ground water and whose landscape was of the 'Florida in Arizona' type, totally alien to its region. When the city was faced with the crisis of severe water shortages after years of dropping ground water levels, it initiated conservation and education policies designed to drastically reduce water consumption. These have had a marked effect on the character of the city. The public landscape and private gardens are now planted with water resistant native plants replacing much of the exotic water dependent species. From a city that could have been described as 'anywhere in south-western USA', it has become a city that dramatically reflects the diversity and character of its desert region.[11]

History and heritage

One obvious lesson that history teaches is that of change. Nothing stays the same. The essence of all landscapes is that of dynamic continuity and evolution. We also know that when they are preserved as museum species, they are in danger of becoming fossilised. We see much evidence of this in the formal gardens, parks, and pioneer villages that have been labelled as heritage. While these places are inherently tied to their geography, vegetation, climate, and political and social contexts, preservation frequently isolates them from these evolutionary processes. Some, like the formal gardens of Versailles, for instance, have been meticulously maintained in the way they were originally conceived. They have quite literally been frozen in time, reflecting the intense boredom that the courtiers of the day were reported to suffer from.

There is obvious validity in treating some places as historic museums, to be studied for their artistic genius, or as nineteenth century follies. The problem comes when change and adaption to new physical and social conditions are precluded from the process of preservation. There are, however, some good examples of where this has taken place. The Royal parks in London, for instance, were once private estates and have since been made public, adapted to diverse interests and activities. Central Park, New York is another where the restoration of Olmsted's original landscape in the 1970s went hand in hand with painstaking consultation with its users – the New York communities that laid claim to the park as their own place. In the Lake District National Parks, park policies permit farming and development to continue while protecting and encouraging the diversity of these landscapes. Farmers within the Pennine Dales Environmentally Sensitive Area, may receive government financial support to continue farming in sympathy with the needs of the environment. And in France, there are 'living farm museums' where farmers are paid to continue farming in the old ways in the interest of conserving old traditions.[15]

Doing as little as possible

The greatest diversity and identity of a place, whether one is talking about a remnant wooded valley or a cohesive neighbourhood community, often comes from minimum, not maximum interference. Jens Jensen was commissioned to design the Sears and Robuck estate in Chicago's American mid-west. His plans called for a minimum disturbance to the beautiful native ravines on the property. When the client saw how much Jensen was charging to do the job, he challenged his $1,000 fee for what appeared to be so little work. Jensen replied that lesser men would have charged far more just to *ruin* a lovely site.[16] In fact, proponents of the formalist style at the time dismissed naturalistic design since it contained very little of what they thought was art. In a 1902 article in *Architectural Record,* it was argued that 'the principles of the natural style have no value as far as artistic expression is concerned'.[17]

In summary, we can learn three things from current effort at naturalising and restoring natural diversity to local and regional places.

Firstly, that no landscape can be returned to its original natural state. Cultural history has, in situations such as the Canadian prairies, completely altered the complex relationships between soils, plants, animals, and fire that existed prior to the presence of human beings. Brome grass, for instance, was originally introduced into the prairies to feed the other major introduction, cattle. Restoration involves the creation of managed landscapes that are a mix of culture and nature; altered but nonetheless resilient and self-sustaining communities.

Secondly, local neighbourhoods, communities, and interest groups are essential to successful projects, since it is they who have the emotional investment in their own places to initiate and sustain action. The ecological restoration of Toronto's Don River is one of many initiatives by local citizens and now supported by government. The last remaining marsh (the Rattray Marsh) on the Lake Ontario shoreline within greater Toronto is protected not only by legislation, but by the community association that spearheaded its preservation, and by the people who front it. Over the years local residents have been encouraged to plant locally native species in their gardens, a practice that has created an involvement in the protection of the marsh.

Thirdly, there is a need for a larger watershed and regional perspective and a larger public constituency in the protection of wild places. This can best be achieved, in my view, by beginning with local places, and expanding into larger regional contexts. Barry Commoner, the distinguished American ecologist, has provided us with a fundamental principle of ecology: that everything is connected to everything else. It's this basic truth that remains central to the issue of place and regional identity.

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Issues and Solutions

by Jan Schapper

THE MACEDON REGION is in a unique situation. This is not only because of the quality of the physical, landscape and cultural resources of the area, but also because of its intellectual input over many years. For ten years now there has been an ongoing collaboration between the region and School of Environmental Planning at the University of Melbourne. This has generated a number of important studies and has provided the research needed to underpin good planning practice.

After the Ash Wednesday bushfires of 1983, a range of studies were undertaken which led to the publication of *Design for Change* in 1985. This publication won a Merit Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects. Following this, regional planning and visual assessments were carried out by different groups of students, in class work and by thesis and research work. This had several benefits. As mentioned above, it offered the Macedon region the intellectual capacity and the facilities of the University. More importantly, it offered the students – future planners and landscape architects – the opportunity to learn in a real planning situation, with all its biophysical and cultural complexity, and to develop an awareness of and passion for the landscape. The staff of the organisations involved in these studies assisted the students with great goodwill and patience, for which I thank them wholeheartedly – it is important for students to be encouraged in their work.

By 1990 it was evident that, because of the expansion of Melbourne and development in the Macedon region, further work was needed. In particular, a study which identified the region's cultural and landscape heritage was required. A pilot study was carried out by Master of Landscape Architecture students and this was used to support the successful application to the Heritage Commission for a grant to undertake the *Macedon Ranges Cultural and Landscape Heritage Study*.

Trevor Budge was a principal consultant for this study, and three of our past students were on the study team. The team worked closely with a steering committee which included representatives from the shires, the university, and the Heritage Branch of the Ministry for Planning and Development.

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Focusing on the Macedon region at this Conference is an important exercise. The challenges facing the region now are not the same as those explored in the early studies, but they are as difficult and as demanding.

The region is exemplary in several ways. Firstly, it demonstrates a complex mosaic of natural and cultural environments. These need to be managed well in order to retain the framework and the character of the region, while also allowing appropriate development to occur. Secondly, the approach taken has been to underpin planning with research, so that wise and informed planning decisions can occur. The intellectual input into planning has been of a high standard, of which we can be proud. Furthermore, community participation and the involvement of all the shires in the region should be a lesson to those who think participation of a wide cross-section of interests is not possible. And finally, a passionate appreciation of the mountain and its environs has underlined efforts to maintain the character of the area, whether garden, forest or pastoral landscape.

It is vital that we understand our landscape and its heritage. Landscape heritage reflects attitudes of people to the environment they live in. The community at all levels has a stake in landscape heritage for it embodies our culture and our identity. As Henri-Frederic Amiel (1821-1881) said: *'Un paysage quelconque est un etat de l'ame'*; that is: 'any landscape is a condition of the spirit.'

The view from the Mount; Hanging Rock pictured from the garden of Ard Choille



Richard Aitken

CONTRIBUTORS

Trevor Budge was the principal consultant for the 1993 Macedon Ranges Cultural Heritage and Landscape Study. As a geographer and town planner he has worked extensively for municipalities and shires in regional Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. He lives in Bendigo and is actively involved in education and community affairs.

Paul Fox as a historian and curator of the Australia Post Museum for which he recently curated an exhibition on the cultural landscape of northern Victoria. His published papers on the perceptions of the Australian landscape are important to the understanding of our landscape and garden history.

Max Gilbert is the director of engineering services for the Shire of Gisborne and a local resident. He has been involved in developing policies and strategies to preserve the natural environment within the shire. He has a particular interest in roadside conservation.

Francine Gilfedder is a landscape architect and horticulturist with a special interest in cultural landscapes. She has undertaken surveys of the cultural landscapes of municipalities and shires within Victoria and interstate. In 1993 she advised the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service on the management of exotic plants in World Heritage Areas.

Michael Hough is a landscape architect and professor at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, Toronto. He is the keynote speaker at the Greening Australia conference in Perth. His latest book Out of Place, addresses the loss of identity and change in unique natural and cultural landscapes and what designers can do to maintain the special character of an area.

Chris McConville has worked on many urban conservation projects, including the Macedon Ranges Cultural Heritage and Landscape Study. He has worked on radio, written several books on urban history and lectures part-time in Heritage Studies at Victoria University.

Karin MacKinnon grew up at Durrol Mount Macedon, which her father purchased in 1919. The garden was already well established when in 1928 her parents commissioned Edna Walling to create a sunken garden on a sloping site. Mrs MacKinnon has nurtured her garden through drought and fire.

Gregory Moore is the principal of the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture at Burnley. With his students he made an extensive study of Mount Macedon after the 1983 bush fires.

Frank Moulds was the chairman of the Forest Commission (now incorporated in the DCNR) and is the author of a history of forestry in Victoria and the Macedon Ranges forests. He is the president of the Gisborne and Mount Macedon Historical Society and is actively involved in the restoration of the memorial cross on Mount Macedon.

Neil Robertson is the National Executive Officer of the Australian Open Garden Scheme, and a long term resident of the Macedon region.

Jan Schapper is the Associate Dean (Professional Programs) at the School of Environmental Design, University of Melbourne. She was an editor of *Design for Change,* a study which was undertaken in the Macedon region after the 1983 bushfires.

The garden in the landscape: Prunus serrulata *at Duneira, Mount Macedon*



Francine Gilfedder

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 1995

SYDNEY & NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Sunday 26

A talk given by Mr Roy Rumsey, retired grower and importer of hybrid tea and heritage roses, on his life and experiences in the nursery industry. **TIME:** 2.00pm **VENUE:** Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust, Observatory Hill, Sydney. **COST:** $5.00 including refreshments. **ENQUIRIES:** Jan Gluskie (02) 428 5947 or Tempe Beaven (02) 969 3043

TASMANIAN BRANCH

- Sunday 19

Day in the Nile District – The day will begin with morning tea at 'Clarendon' provided by the Clarendon Committee. This will enable members to view the work to the gardeners cottage which we helped fund. We then visit some very interesting private gardens in the Nile district. More details in the February newsletter. **TIME:** 10.30am **ENQUIRIES:** Ann Cripps (002) 25 1860 or Prue Green (003) 97 8281

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Thursday 23

Tour of Parliament House Gardens with Neil Gemmill (Head Gardener) and Andrea Macdonald (Landscape Architect). **TIME:** 6.00pm. **VENUE:** Parliament House, meet at Spring Street pedestrian entrance. **COST:** No charge.

- Garden and Landscape Photography Short Course 1995. Bookings now available for second course. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** and a booking form please contact Jackie Courmadias on telephone/facsimile (03) 650 5043.

MARCH 1995

ACT & SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

- 3 March

Ainslie amble. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** telephone (06) 258 4547.

SYDNEY AND NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Friday 31 March-Sunday April 2

Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries Seminar – Sponsored by the National Trust of Australia (NSW), Australian Garden History Society, Sydney and Northern NSW Branch and Dubbo City Council. FRIDAY 31 MARCH: *The Conservation and Management of Historic Parks and Cemeteries.* Saturday $25.00 Sunday no charge. **BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRIES:** Jill McCann (National Trust), PO Box 1713, Dubbo, 2830. Telephone (068) 81 4222.

TASMANIAN BRANCH

- Sunday 19

Channel Gardens – Three interesting and different gardens plus some nurseries including Mr and Mrs R. Harvey's garden at Nichols Rivulet, Mr and Mrs C. Lewincamp at Cygnet and Mrs A. Lawton at Wattle Grove. More details in the February newsletter. **TIME:** 10.45am **ENQUIRIES:** Jan Ross (002) 62 2279.

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Saturday 18

The Living Sculptures of Edna Walling – A gourmet brunch and a private viewing of *The Living Sculptures of Edna Walling* exhibition with an introductory talk by Rae Rogers of Bickleigh Vale. Also, exhibitions of architectural landscapes by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Lucy Mahony and Charles Bush self portraits. **VENUE:** McClelland Gallery, Studio Park, McClelland Drive, Langwarrin. **COST:** $25.00 per head which includes gourmet brunch. **TIME:** 9.00am to 12 noon **BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL:** (03) 650 5043

APRIL 1995

ACT & SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Friday 28

A Palette of Gardens: heritage week seminar on significant gardens of the ACT. **ENQUIRIES:** telephone (06) 258 4547

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH

- Sunday 23

Open days at 'Hillview', Sutton Forest, forimer country residence of NSW Governors. **COST:** $4.00

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Saturday 8 and Sunday 9

Bendigo Gardens Tour: with Michael Searby and Kevin Walsh. Self-drive tour including private and public historic gardens, strolls, slide-show and lecture. Car pooling available. **ENQUIRIES:** (03) 650 5043.

MAY 1995

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Saturday 6-Saturday 13

Lord Howe Island. Guided tour with Rodger Elliot. **CONTACT & BOOKINGS:** National Office (03) 650 5043

JUNE 1995

ACT & SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Watercolour plan workshop. **TELEPHONE** (064) 535 578

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Tuesday 13

Lecture by Helen Armstrong on 'Australian Gardens: styles and influences'.

AUGUST 1995

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Tuesday 8

Annual General Meeting – Talks by Miffy Gilbert on Wombat Park, Daylesford and Linda Ford on Delatite, Mansfield.

Print Post No. 345842/0016